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THE TULLAHOMA CAMPAIGN: OPERATIONAL INSIGHTS

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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B.A., University of Maine, Orono Maine, 1978

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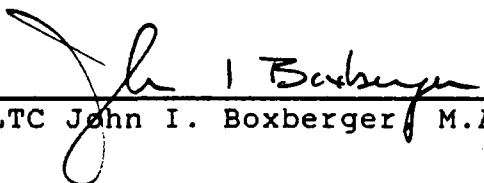
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ABSTRACT

THE TULLAHOMA CAMPAIGN: OPERATIONAL INSIGHTS by MAJ
Richard J. Brewer, USA, 192 pages.

This study examines the operational insights offered by the analysis of the Tullahoma, or Middle Tennessee, Campaign of 1863. The thesis uncovers these operational insights by examining how Major General William S. Rosecrans, commander of the Army of the Cumberland, and General Braxton Bragg, commander of the Army of Tennessee, planned for and conducted the nine day campaign.

This study of both commanders' planning and execution of a campaign characterized by maneuver, rather than large scale battles, highlights five important insights into operational warfighting. These insights include the translation of strategic guidance into an operational plan, offensive and defensive operational planning, the importance of deception, the effects of sustainment on an operation, and the influence of leadership on the planning and conduct of a campaign.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War represents a field of study rich with examples of operational art. As such it provides numerous insights into operational warfighting. One campaign in particular embodies many of the operational principles that promote sound operational planning and execution, despite it being a little-known campaign of maneuver in which the participants suffered fewer than 2,300 casualties. It was the Tullahoma or Middle Tennessee Campaign of 1863.

The Tullahoma Campaign immediately preceded the Chickamauga campaign and in the larger operational sense was part of it. It marked the peak of Federal Major General William Starke Rosecrans' career and the continued decline of Confederate General Braxton Bragg's. It was a campaign of brilliant operational planning and maneuver by Rosecrans and less than effective operational performance by Bragg.

Despite its relative obscurity, the Tullahoma Campaign had far reaching effects on the course of the war in Middle Tennessee. Rosecrans' victory coincided with the two great Union victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg and as a result is often overlooked. Yet, this little known or

studied campaign resulted in the opening of the path to Chattanooga, and ultimately, the capture of Chattanooga and Atlanta.

The very nature of this campaign is a stark contrast to most Civil War campaigns. It was not a campaign that began or ended with a climactic battle. The casualties were a mere drop in the bucket of the carnage which characterized the American Civil War. Unlike most campaigns it occurred in terrible weather conditions; it rained the entire nine days of the campaign. The commanders within each army were for the most part unknown to those who observed the war in the East. The armies themselves had a distinctive western composition. Most of the Federals hailed from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. The preponderance of Bragg's army came from Tennessee, Alabama and Kentucky. Both armies were veteran armies with experienced commanders and extensive wartime service.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to determine and examine the operational insights gleaned from an analysis of the campaign. After acquainting the reader with the strategic goals of the United States and Confederate States in 1863, the thesis will follow the translation of those goals into operational plans and how those plans failed or succeeded. Following this discussion the thesis will

address both operational commanders in terms of their success in accomplishing their missions and the strategic goals within their theaters. The underlying theme, then, will highlight the process of operational warfare and provide increased insight into the nature of operational warfighting.

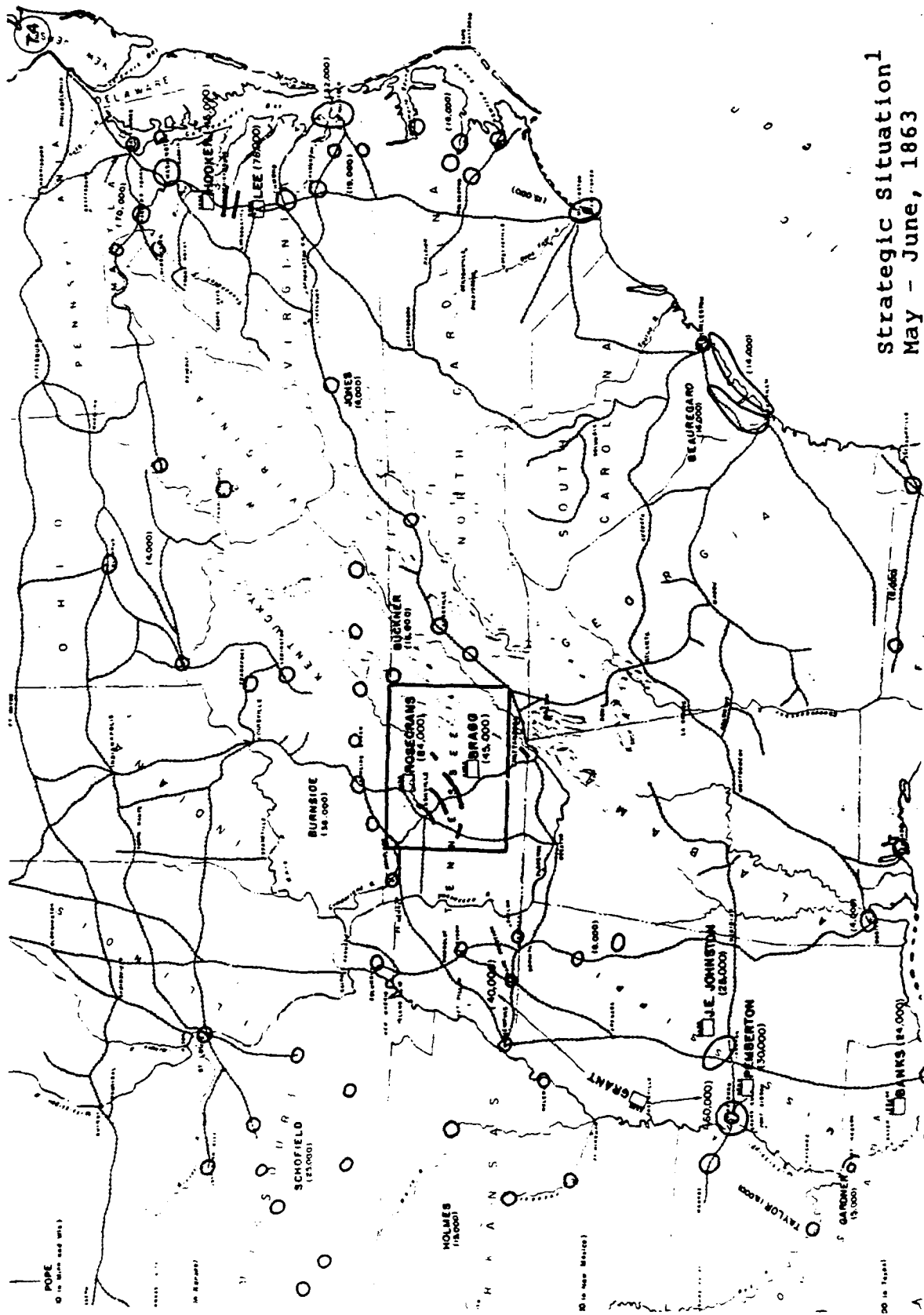
CHAPTER 2

PRELUDE TO BATTLE

STRATEGIC SETTING

In the spring of 1863 Union and Confederate armies prepared for another season of campaigning which would hopefully end the war. Following a winter of fruitless attempts to gain Vicksburg by attacking from the north and west, Major General Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee sat on the west bank of the Mississippi ready to continue its advance against General John C. Pemberton's forces around Vicksburg (Map 1). In the East, Major General Joseph Hooker, with the Army of the Potomac still smarting from their defeat at Fredericksburg the previous December, prepared again for a battle with General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Major General William S. Rosecrans, at Murfreesboro, after his victory over General Braxton Bragg on 2 Jan 1863, faced Bragg's Army of Tennessee and threatened Middle Tennessee and ultimately the rail hub at Chattanooga, which, if seized would mean the opening of the gates to Georgia.

Hooker and Grant moved on 27 and 29 April, respectively, against the Confederates. On 30 April Grant crossed the Mississippi River south of Vicksburg and in the



Strategic Situation¹
May - June, 1863

early days of May maneuvered between Vicksburg and Jackson, Mississippi. After capturing Jackson, Grant advanced toward Vicksburg, defeated Pemberton's army of maneuver at Champion Hill and, by 18 May reached the outskirts of the city. On 4 July Pemberton surrendered his army and the city of Vicksburg. The fall of Vicksburg made the other Confederate fortress, Port Hudson, untenable. With its surrender on 8 July the entire length of the Mississippi River was in Union hands.²

Hooker, in the East, moved against Lee's army on the last day of April but lost the subsequent Battle of Chancellorsville. On the 4 May Hooker withdrew his entire army north of the Rappahannock River. The Army of Northern Virginia again prevented the Federals from gaining access to the land south of the Rappahannock. After the battle, the Army of the Potomac rested near Fredericksburg until Lee's movements north forced it to pursue Lee as he moved north toward the great confrontation at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.³

As these events developed in other theaters, Rosecrans continued to prepare his Army of the Cumberland for the summer offensive he would commence on 23 June against Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. A few cavalry and infantry skirmishes characterized the action between these armies from the end of the Battle of Stones River in January to the initiation of Rosecrans' offensive in June.

UNION MILITARY STRATEGY 1863

In 1861 and 1862 the Union had attempted to strangle the Confederacy economically -- the strategy suggested by the "Anaconda Plan." Winfield Scott's supporting military strategy, however, was distorted by a strong desire to capture the Confederate capital at Richmond and at the same time protect Washington. Major General Henry W. Halleck, on his assignment as General-in-Chief of all Union armies in July of 1862, brought with him a firm conviction that there was much more to Scott's "Anaconda Plan" than simple strangulation. The path to victory for the North lay in a strategy that capitalized on the Union effort in the West. It was, in a way, a continuation of Scott's policy of strangling the South, but it went beyond the current idea maintained by Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that constant pressure on the enemy on all fronts was the only way to win.⁴

Halleck possibly thought that the Union armies in the West, because of their distance from Washington, might stand a better chance of success. These western armies would not have to contend with the continued interference from Washington, given the time and distance that separated them from the politicians in the East. Also Halleck certainly realized that his Western armies had won recent victories and appeared to be on the verge of winning more.⁵

Halleck recognized the stalemate in the Eastern theater. The Federal Army of the Potomac and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia had done little more than bloody each other without attaining significant territorial gains. Furthermore, Federal success against Richmond would be a great psychological victory, but little would change in the East if Lee's army survived. The Confederates would move their capital and continue the war.⁶ If, on the other hand, Halleck could implement his Jominian beliefs and concentrate Union strength against Confederate weakness, a resolution to the war might result.⁷

The capture of key western cities would serve to cut the Confederate rail and water routes and render it difficult, perhaps impossible, for the Confederates to supply their armies. The West represented a bread basket for the Confederacy. Grain crops and livestock were plentiful in the regions west of the Appalachians. Preventing these supplies from reaching the Confederate armies would eventually take its toll.⁸

Halleck also believed that such a policy, in concert with constant pressure on Confederate armies in the East, would divide the Confederate high command on measures to counter the Union threat. He believed that maintaining pressure in the East should further Confederate concerns for their capital. This strategy, Halleck asserted, would make it difficult, if not impossible for the Confederates to

shift forces from the eastern theater to the western theater.⁹

Lincoln, admittedly concerned about the risk involved, and ever conscious of public demand for the capture of Richmond, accepted Halleck's idea. This relatively new departure, or so called "Lincoln-Halleck" strategy, would set the prevalent direction for the North over the next two and a half years of the war. It meant that in early 1863 the Union would make its major effort in the West. While the Army of the Potomac would still conduct Eastern campaigns, their actions would be a manifestation of Lincoln and Halleck's desire to keep constant pressure on all points of the Confederacy.¹⁰

Halleck, having given priority to the West during the winter of 1862-1863, identified Grant's Army of the Tennessee for the major effort. Halleck then directed Rosecrans to support Grant's movements by fixing Bragg's army. By May, Hooker's failure at Chancellorsville, and Grant's successful crossing of the Mississippi which caused General Joseph Johnston to shift Confederate forces to relieve Vicksburg, led Halleck to give further guidance. He directed Rosecrans and Major General Ambrose Burnside, commanding the Department of the Ohio and operating with forces under Brigadier General George Hartsuff northeast of Rosecrans in Kentucky, to maintain pressure on the Confederate forces and drive them from East Tennessee. As

Rosecrans conducted his offensive Halleck wanted Burnside to protect Rosecrans' left flank and cooperate with his advance by destroying Brigadier General Simon Bolivar Buckner's Army of East Tennessee and thereby denying the northern portion of East Tennessee to the Confederacy.¹¹

CONFEDERATE MILITARY STRATEGY 1863

Jefferson Davis and the Confederate Secretary of War, J.A. Seddon, not unlike their northern counterparts, had an inclination to focus more on the Eastern theater of operations. They did not, however, go as far toward prioritizing and defining the goals for their armies. Davis, in particular, was steadfast in his belief that through the use of interior lines the Confederacy should be able to be strong where it mattered, when it mattered. He, therefore, gave his Western theater commander, General Joseph E. Johnston, guidance that reflected this desire to be strong everywhere. Essentially, this meant Johnston would not receive definitive guidance that specified where he could take risk and where he must establish his main effort.

Johnston and others saw the fallacy of Davis' logic and tried as best they could to sway the Confederate President. Johnston suggested concentrating forces for decisive battles. Johnston further informed Davis that in order to concentrate, certain areas might be temporarily lost and asked Davis to specify what areas were of vital

importance to the Confederacy and which were not. Davis, with Seddon's concurrence, refused to specify any areas as more important than others. Davis argued the North was incapable of conducting more than one major western operation at a time and further believed that Johnston would have adequate time to know where and when the Federals would attack. Davis believed Johnston could shuttle his troops where needed most.¹²

Johnston countered this argument by trying to convince Davis that Tennessee, by its physical location, was vital to the protection of the Confederate depots in Chattanooga, Atlanta, and other storehouses in the south. He further added that it was not as simple as it appeared to shuttle forces from one place to another in his theater. Railroads seldom ran directly toward the point an army had to reach. Even in the best of cases, time consuming train changes because of differing railroad gauges were required.¹³

There were others who tended to agree with Johnston's appraisal. General P.G.T. Beauregard wrote Johnston in early May of 1863 that he believed in establishing priority for an offensive in Tennessee and Kentucky. He felt such a move necessary to relieve the pressure on Vicksburg and the Mississippi River. He told Johnston that the offensive would draw Union forces from Grant's army to contend with the new threat. Whatever merit

Beauregard's idea held, Johnston did not aggressively seek an opportunity to propose a bold offensive to Davis. Instead, Johnston concerned himself with the problems of coordinating Pemberton's and Bragg's armies. Additionally, he continued to assert that if priority were placed in Middle Tennessee, it should be for defensive purposes initially. Only after the wearing down of Rosecrans' army should the Army of Tennessee take to the offense.¹⁴

Also in May, Lieutenant General James Longstreet proposed to Davis and Seddon that his own corps from Virginia, and elements of Johnston's western forces reinforce Bragg's army in Tennessee. He suggested an attack by the Army of Tennessee into Ohio to draw Grant from his siege, and force the Union armies well back into the northern states. Davis tabled Longstreet's idea, perhaps because he was at the time intrigued by an alternative proposed by General Lee.¹⁵

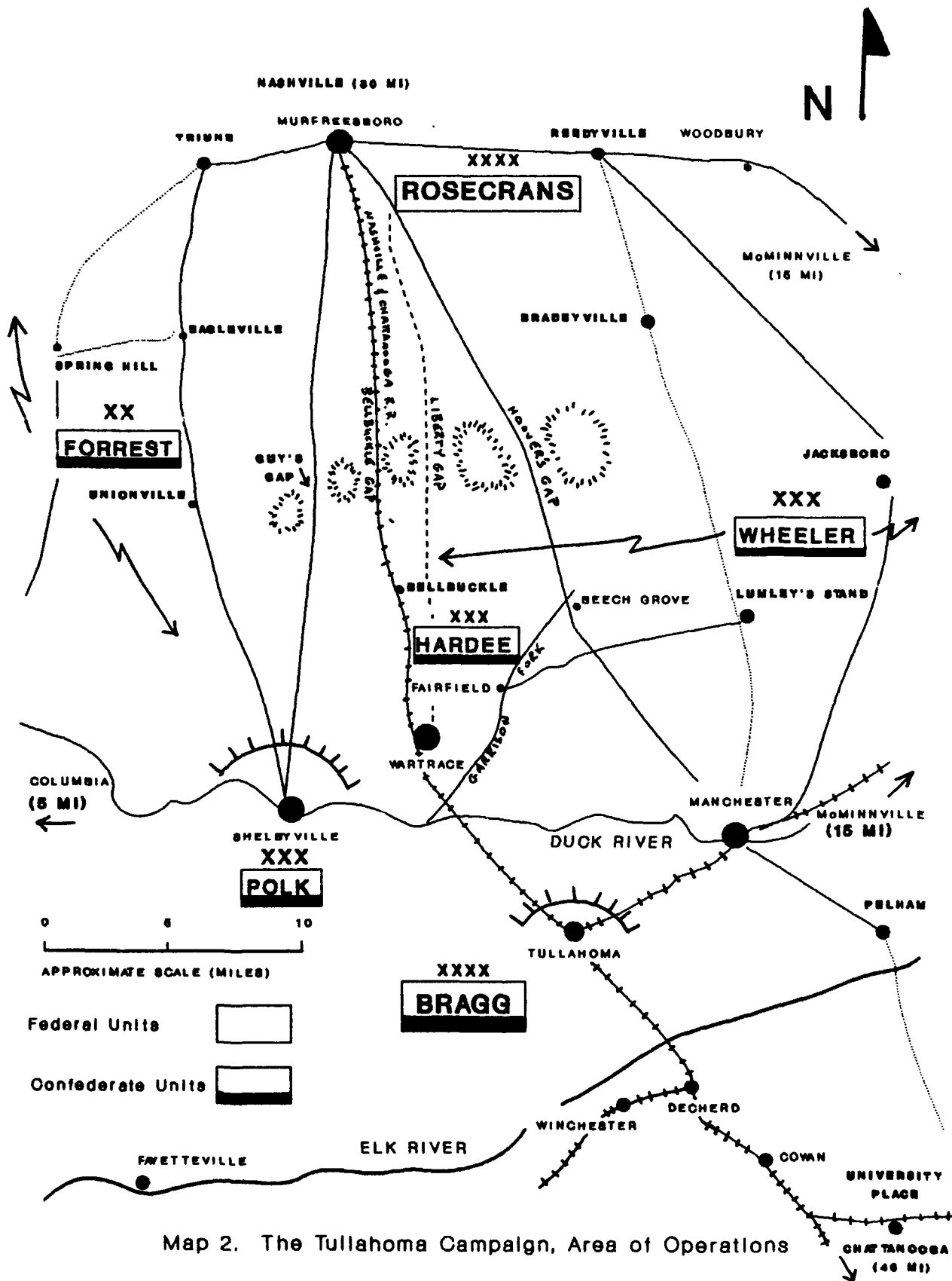
Lee, not desiring to commit any part of the Army of Northern Virginia for western excursions, had his own ideas for breaking the deadlock. He proposed an attack deep into the enemy's territory in the East. Lee felt a successful attack into Pennsylvania, and the subsequent defeat of the Army of the Potomac might cause an already tired Union public to pressure their leaders to sue for peace. In late May, Davis accepted Lee's plan for the invasion of Pennsylvania.¹⁶

Davis thus closed the door on a western offensive strategy or a diversion of troops to the west. It fell to Johnston to develop a strategy for the armies in the West using the forces at hand. By May, left to fend for himself, and directed to defend everything, Johnston absorbed himself in the problem of Vicksburg and generally neglected the rest of his theater.

OPERATIONAL SETTING

For the first six months of 1863 the Army of Tennessee and the Army of the Cumberland sat no more than thirty miles apart astride the main line of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad (Map 2) and each used it for their resupply. Rosecrans drew his sustenance from Nashville and Louisville to the north. Bragg received the bulk of his forage from the local countryside and Alabama to the south. He relied on his base at Chattanooga, and whatever he could procure from Atlanta, for his dry goods and ordnance. Bragg's army was all that stood between Rosecrans and the major rail hub in Chattanooga.

The spring was a fairly quiet time for both armies. Both engaged periodically in cavalry raids on each others lines of supply, but there was little other combat activity. Both seemed content to ready their armies for the eventual confrontation. Units were restructured, supplies stockpiled and reinforcements sought.



General Bragg, after withdrawing from the Murfreesboro battlefield on 3 January 1863, had established a defensive line along the Duck River. By June of 1863 his army of 45,000 was spread from Spring Hill in the west to McMinnville in the east. Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry division covered the Confederate left flank and screened a tenuous line from Spring Hill to the outer reaches of Shelbyville. Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk's corps of two divisions occupied defensive works in Shelbyville. Lieutenant General William Hardee's two division corps occupied Wartrace, with elements garrisoning Tullahoma, and others picketing the southern egress points of Liberty and Hoover's Gaps. Major General Joseph Wheeler's cavalry corps, positioned forward of Polk's and Hardee's corps, occupied a line from Guy's Gap in the west to McMinnville in the east.¹⁷

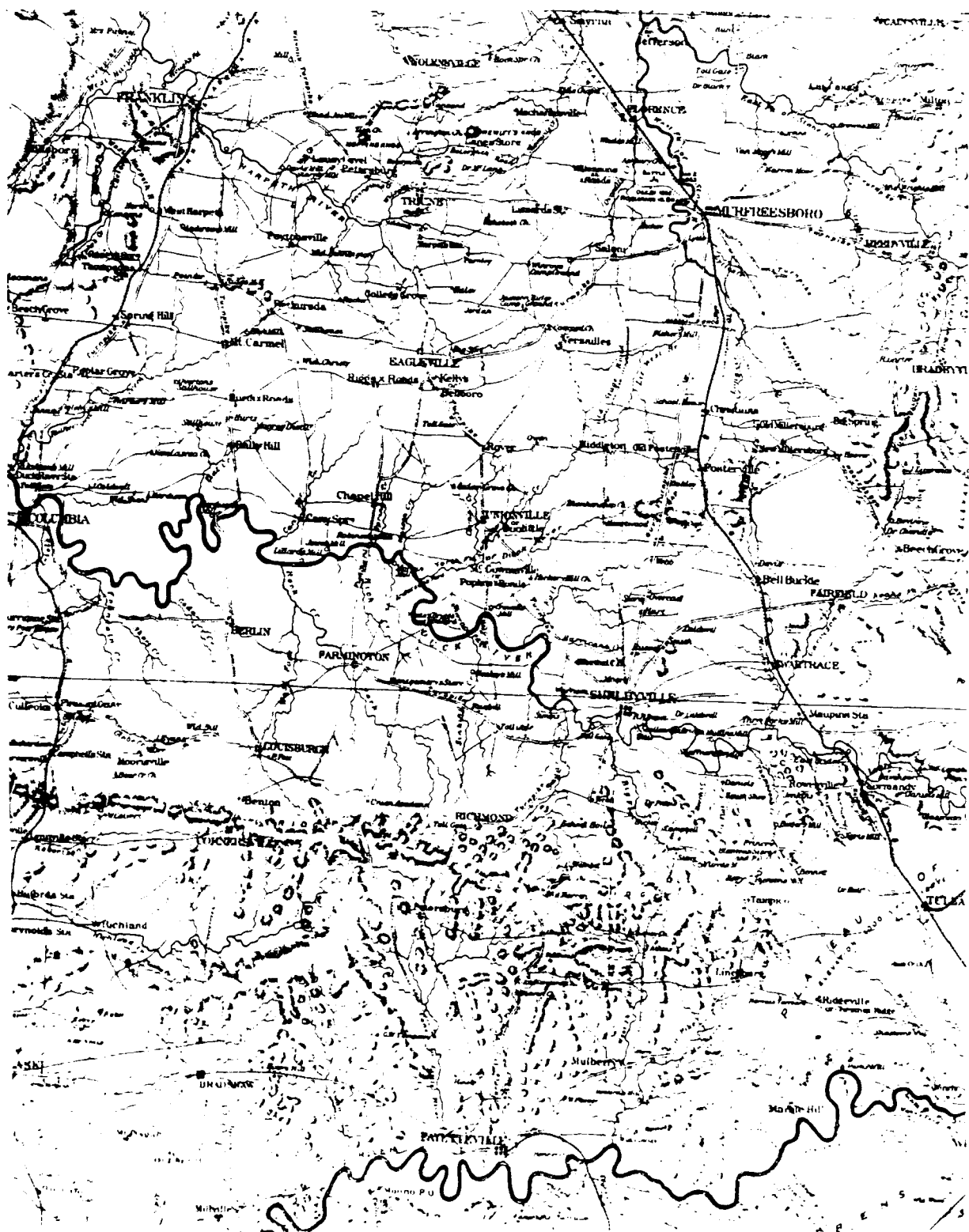
Major General Rosecrans encamped around Murfreesboro with four infantry and one cavalry corps (XIV Corps under Major General George Thomas, XX Corps under Major General Alexander McCook, XXI Corps under Major General Thomas Crittenden, the reserve corps commanded by Major General Gordon Granger and the Cavalry corps under Major General David Stanley) totaling over 70,000 effectives.¹⁸ Rosecrans' infantry corps were stronger than Bragg's, each containing at least three divisions. The reserve corps, however, had two divisions assigned to picket duty along

the line of communication from Louisville to Nashville, leaving it with only one division for the campaign. Rosecrans, too, established a series of entrenchments to protect against any possible offensive attempt by Bragg.

Rosecrans, during the intervening months was more successful than Bragg in bolstering his manpower. Through great diligence and perseverance, Rosecrans managed to build his cavalry arm up to 10,000 effectives. With the addition of 3,000 mounted infantry Rosecrans, in effect, had 13,000 horsemen. This put Rosecrans at least at par with Bragg's cavalry.¹⁹ Rosecrans actually had several advantages in cavalry. His mounts were in better shape than Bragg's and his mounted infantry brigade, under Colonel John T. Wilder, was armed with the new Spencer repeating rifle.

THE TERRAIN

The terrain in Middle Tennessee presented challenges to the attacker and the defender alike. Poor weather would intensify the challenges. The terrain itself is varied (Map 3). Numerous creeks laced the entire area and proved to be a hindrance to movement in wet weather. The relief of terrain features in the area greatly affected the course of the roads, streams and railroads. As one moved south from Murfreesboro to the Cumberland Mountains the terrain continued to increase in elevation. While the elevation changes were generally gradual, there were some exceptions.



Map 3. Terrain in the Tullahoma Area of Operations.²⁰



Map 3. Terrain in the Area of Operations (continued). 21

Bragg's defensive line along the Duck River received protection from one such exception. Approximately ten miles north of Shelbyville an east-west line of high rocky hills rose steeply. At places, this line of hills was three to four miles in depth, from north to south. They extended from Bradeyville in the east to about three miles west of Fosterville. The hills themselves rose as much as 500 feet above the table land and presented a barrier to movement.

Through these hills four gaps provided access between Murfreesboro and Tullahoma. Hoover's Gap was a long, narrow defile that narrowed to the width of two wagons at places. Further to the west lay Liberty Gap, then Bellbuckle Gap, through which the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad ran. Each of the three gaps was suitable for defense by a determined and well emplaced infantry force. Lastly, the Shelbyville Pike ran through the low ground at Guy's Gap. Guy's Gap was actually a low, wide saddle, barely noticeable as a gap. It served little purpose to a defender as the ground west of it was traversible.²²

The next exception to the gradual elevation change was the escarpment running from Wartrace northeast to Woodbury. South of this line the terrain rose steeply to form a wide plateau that extended to the Duck River. Except for the hills breaking the plateau on the eastern side, this plateau was uniform.

West of Wartrace and north of Shelbyville, extending to Murfreesboro and west to Columbia - Franklin, the land remained basically flat. Except for a few creeks, the terrain in this area was easily trafficable.

Moving further south another exception to the gradual elevation changes occurred. Another escarpment rose up from the south bank of the Duck River and formed the Plateau of the "Barrens." The elevation rose 500 to 600 feet above the previously mentioned escarpment. It was on this plateau that Bragg's advanced depot at Tullahoma rested. The "Barrens" ran in an easterly direction from Upper Elkton (50 miles west of Tullahoma) to Tullahoma, then ran northeasterly to McMinnville and beyond.

The last sharp elevation increase in the area of operations occurred just to the south of the Elk River in the vicinity of the Cowan - University Place - Pelham line. It was here that the ground rose sharply up as it reached the Cumberland Mountains. At an elevation 1200 feet above the "Barrens," the Cumberland Mountains were visible from a great distance and appeared as a solid wall to southerly movement.

The two major rivers in the area of operations also hindered movement. The Duck River never exceeded more than fifty yards in width during good weather and was fordable at many places. Still, there were a number of points, particularly to the west of the Chattanooga and Nashville

Railroad where crossings were possible only on bridges or in the ford sites.

The Elk River presented a somewhat more difficult problem. In places it was more than fifty yards wide in good weather. One generally had to cross exclusively on bridges or the limited number of ford sites. Worse, there were only four good bridges between Pelham and Allisonia (vicinity Estell Springs). Two of the bridges, one a railroad and the other a highway bridge, crossed the river at Allisonia. One bridge crossed at Bethpage and the remaining bridge crossed at Pelham.

In 1863 the area had a number of good, macadamized roads, the best of which ran between the larger towns and cities. Only one major railroad ran through the area but it did have short spurs. One spur ran from Tullahoma to McMinnville via Manchester, another ran from Decherd to Winchester and the last ran from Cowan to Tracy City via University Place. The terrain determined largely where the roads went. Though many of these roads joined at points such as the gaps or bridges there were a number of avenues for north-south movement. To the attacker these avenues represented a number of opportunities.

Should Rosecrans opt for a direct approach to Shelbyville, Wartrace or Tullahoma, there were three good routes to use. Each of the three would entail movements through one of the three westernmost gaps in the line of low

hills north of the Duck River. If Rosecrans desired to move on Wartrace, and then to Tullahoma the roads running through Liberty Gap and Bellbuckle Gap presented the most direct approach. If he desired to move straight to Shelbyville from Murfreesboro, the Shelbyville Pike, which ran through Guy's Gap, presented the best option.

From the vicinity of Murfreesboro Rosecrans could also choose a number of indirect routes to envelop Bragg's Duck River line and continue on to Tullahoma, Chattanooga or points in between. On Bragg's right flank two fairly good roads led from McMinnville to Tullahoma. It was, however, a 75 mile trip from Murfreesboro to Tullahoma via McMinnville and therefore not a likely route for an attacker.²³

There were other options available for flank movements. The town of Manchester presented an opportunity to stage for a flank attack on Tullahoma. It was possible to reach Manchester by two routes. One led from Bradeyville to Manchester and avoided the high rocky hills where the gaps were. The other went directly from Murfreesboro through Hoover's Gap to Manchester.

Once at Manchester there were four roads proceeding due west to Tullahoma. These roads allowed an advance on a broad front. If, however, Rosecrans preferred he could go south from Manchester and bypass Tullahoma. From Manchester there were roads that led to Pelham, the University, Decherd and Winchester.

Lastly, the numerous roads to the west allowed easy access to Shelbyville. The terrain on this flank was more open and level. The Shelbyville Pike was the most direct route from Murfreesboro to Shelbyville. To the west the Middleton road also ran to Shelbyville from Murfreesboro. Further to the west there were a number of less direct roads such as those running from Triune, Spring Hill and Columbia.

During their planning for the campaign both commanders carefully considered the terrain. Neither, however, indicated undue concern for what effect the weather might have on their plans. Prior to the execution of Rosecrans' advance there were no discussions concerning what the army would do in the event of heavy rain. It was unfortunate, for this was one campaign that the weather dramatically affected trafficability.

While the main pikes running from Murfreesboro to Shelbyville, Wartrace and Manchester were macadamized, the lesser roads connecting the smaller towns were in most cases nothing more than worn dirt tracks. During periods of sustained rain, these roads became virtual quagmires. Crittenden's corps would travel on one such route during his advance and it would take him four days to travel 17 miles.

Similarly, the creeks and rivers became significant obstacles to movement during periods of heavy rain. The Duck and Elk Rivers swelled normally above their banks in rainy weather. The widths and depths of both rivers could

increase as much as twice their normal measurements. When this happened one could only cross the Duck River at the ford and bridge sites. In the case of the Elk River, the fords could also become completely unusable leaving only the bridges as a means to cross.

Rain also greatly increased the velocity of the rivers. This made it difficult, in some cases impossible to put pontoon bridges across the river. In those places where fording was possible it meant the crossing force had to place heavy ropes across the river to prevent having the men and horses swept downstream.

The road systems and potential weather effects, combined with the nature of the terrain, made defense a nightmare anywhere forward of the Elk River. The attacker possessed a great advantage with so many avenues to choose from. The opportunities for envelopments, either single or double, abounded in this region. The multitude of avenues available to an attacker made it practically impossible to defend effectively against each one. This meant that the defender could defend only the most likely attack routes in force. Additionally, if the weather turned wet, a defending force with its back to either of the major rivers risked losing its withdrawal routes.

However, if the defender could avoid defending forward of the Duck River, there were other options. Except for the McMinnsville via Jasper approach (20 miles southeast

of the University), all other roads in the region traversed the Cumberlands at either Cowan or University. This was the one piece of decisive terrain that Bragg had at his disposal. A determined resistance in this location would force an enemy to take a wide detour. A wide detour would, in turn, expose the attacker to flank attacks on his line of communication. Most importantly, a wide detour would preclude use of the railroad for sustainment.²⁴

Importantly, even though forces could traverse southeast to Chattanooga via Cowan, this movement had to pass through the railroad tunnel at Cowan. The 2200 foot long tunnel completely controlled access to the railroad, and without it forces could not move through, or over the mountains at this point. In the event the Confederates destroyed or blocked the tunnel it would cause a lengthy delay to the Federals. Faced with such a proposition there would only be the road south from University on which the Federals could proceed southeast to Chattanooga.²⁵

THE COMMANDERS

THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND

By the spring of 1863 the senior commanders in the Army of the Cumberland and the Army of Tennessee were veterans of extensive Civil War service. Most were educated at the Military Academy at West Point. Some had served on continuous active duty for over 20 years. Many fought in the Indian Wars and in the Mexican War. One experience they

all shared, however, was prior to the Civil War, they had never maneuvered organizations the size and complexity of those they now commanded.

William Starke Rosecrans, commander of the Army of the Cumberland, was born 6 September 1819 in Delaware County, Ohio. Despite a limited formal education, Rosecrans became an extremely proficient reader and demonstrated an inventive streak. In 1838, Rosecrans, received an appointment to the United States Military Academy. He excelled in West Point's formal academic regimen and graduated in 1842 fifth in his class of fifty-one. As a reward for his academic excellence, Rosecrans was commissioned a lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers.²⁶

On his departure from West Point, Rosecrans spent a year working on fortifications at Hampton Roads, Virginia. He then spent four years at West Point teaching engineering, an assignment which prevented Lieutenant Rosecrans from seeing action in the Mexican War. The years that followed were uneventfully spent on various engineering projects. In 1854 Rosecrans resigned his commission to return to civilian life where he eventually applied his inventive talents to the refining industry.²⁷

When the war began Rosecrans volunteered as an aide to Major General George B. McClellan, commander of the Department of the Ohio. "Colonel" Rosecrans served in this capacity from 19 April to 10 June 1861 when he became the

commander of the 23rd Ohio Infantry. Shortly following this appointment, Rosecrans became a brigadier general in the Regular Army and took command of a brigade. He participated in McClellan's operations in western Virginia and won his first significant engagement at the Battle of Rich Mountain on 11 July 1861. When McClellan left to take command of the Army of the Potomac, Rosecrans served as the commander of the Department of the Ohio until September 21, 1861 and then as the commander of the Department of Western Virginia until 7 April 1862.²⁸

Rosecrans left Virginia to take command of a division in the Army of the Mississippi and became the commander of that army on 11 June 1862. This position placed Rosecrans directly under Major General Ulysses S. Grant. Rosecrans fought his first battle as commander of the Army of the Mississippi at Iuka, Mississippi on 19 September 1862. Despite winning the battle, he failed to pursue the withdrawing Confederates as Grant had ordered. Thus began the ill feelings that developed between the two men. The day after Iuka, Rosecrans learned of his previously confirmed promotion to major general.²⁹

The Battle of Corinth, Mississippi followed on 3-4 October 1862. In this battle Rosecrans skillfully repulsed Generals Earl Van Dorn and Sterling Price and exacted a heavy toll on the attacking Confederates. As at Iuka,

however, Rosecrans failed to pursue the retreating Confederates, increasing Grant's annoyance with him.³⁰

Grant even considered relieving Rosecrans, however, orders directing Rosecrans to succeed Major General Don Carlos Buell in command of the Army of the Cumberland, saved Grant the trouble. Grant indicated in his memoirs that he felt a separate command would be good for Rosecrans and would show the qualities of sound generalship Grant knew Rosecrans to possess.³¹

The assignment to the Army of the Cumberland would pit Rosecrans against Braxton Bragg, his adversary throughout his command of this army. After building his supply base at Nashville, Rosecrans moved south and fought the Battle of Stones River at Murfreesboro, Tennessee on 31 December 1862 - 2 January 1863. The casualties suffered by both armies rivaled Shiloh; all told more than 24,000 men. Rosecrans, despite facing near disaster on the first day of the battle, saw Bragg withdraw and was thus able to claim victory for the North. Rosecrans then settled in around Murfreesboro for the remainder of the winter and on into spring. He spent the ensuing six months preparing his army for its inevitable advance on Bragg.³²

Following the Battle of Stones River, Rosecrans enjoyed a mixed reputation as a military commander. He was known throughout the United States Army as a methodical planner and an excellent organizer.³³ He had a keen eye for

operational maneuver and grand strategy. Strategy, in fact, was one of his more noted strengths. It is likely that his membership in Dennis Hart Mahan's "Napoleon Club" at West Point had fired Rosecrans' interest and proficiency in strategy.³⁴

It is perhaps significant that even Rosecrans' principal enemy, Braxton Bragg, said good things about him. Following the Battle of Stones River, Bragg, in his official report of the battle, issued forth a complimentary word for Rosecrans and his enemy which fought " . . . with a skill and judgment which has ever characterized his able commander [Rosecrans]."³⁵ On another occasion, Bragg remarked to the visiting Colonel James Arthur Lyon Fremantle, of Her Majesty's Coldstream Guards, that Rosecrans was a firm leader, and the only man he was aware of in the Union army who did not suffer grave defeats.³⁶

The opinions of the soldiers of Rosecrans' army are yet another indicator of the high reputation Rosecrans enjoyed. Rosecrans' soldiers liked him and respected his courage. A member of Rosecrans' army would write years later that "Old Rosey" enjoyed a great reputation with the men. He went on to say that " . . . no commander was ever more liked by his soldiers than Rosecrans."³⁷ Many under his command observed that Rosecrans held a warm place in the hearts of the soldiers, that he was respected for his bravery under fire, and that he was a compassionate leader

as demonstrated by his care and concern for the health and comfort of the troops.³⁸

Rosecrans' reputation with others, however, was less favorable. Grant, as a result of Rosecrans' actions at Corinth and Iuka, accused him of lacking aggressiveness. Because Rosecrans expressed little love for politicians, and did not appreciate political interference with his campaign plans, he often drew criticism for his actions from Stanton and Halleck. Still others, notably, Brigadier General James A. Garfield, Rosecrans' chief of staff, would accuse Rosecrans of possessing great genius for strategy, but lacking patience in combat to give the tactical maneuverings time to develop.³⁹

Another important aspect of Rosecrans' reputation was his character and personality. Rosecrans was a methodical planner who did not believe in accepting battle without making all necessary preparations. Rather, he preferred to take the time and meticulously prepare for an upcoming operation. Rosecrans would also spend a great amount of time in reflection prior to a campaign.⁴⁰ His almost six months of preparation for his move against Tullahoma proved to be an extreme example of this tendency.

Rosecrans was also tireless. He seemed capable of great amounts of work with little sleep. He was a devout Roman Catholic, but possessed an extensive vocabulary of profanities that he was not averse to using. He was often

given to excitement, not from fear or nervousness, but because of anger or impatience.⁴¹

Whatever the opinion held by those associated with Rosecrans, it is likely that his continued bickering with the higher authorities contributed to his relief following the Battle of Chickamauga. Other generals lost and remained in command because of political support, but Rosecrans had managed to erode whatever support he might have had by the time the call for his relief came.⁴²

If Rosecrans had a mixed reputation as a commander, so too did most of his corps commanders. His XIV Corps commander was the notable exception. Major General George Henry "Pap" Thomas, a Virginian, attended West Point, graduated 12th in his class in 1840 and joined the 3rd U.S. Artillery. Prior to the Civil War he fought bravely against the Seminoles. Following the Seminole Wars Thomas fought in the Mexican War, served on the faculty at West Point as a tactics instructor and fought Indians in the western frontier.⁴³

With the outbreak of the Civil War Thomas, a major in the 2nd Cavalry, remained with the Union, despite his Virginia roots. He quickly achieved a reputation as a dependable and proficient field commander.⁴⁴ Thomas fought his first battle of the war as a brigade commander at the First Manassass. This was his first and only Eastern theater fight. Following Manassass and an assignment to the

Western theater he fought at Mill Springs, Shiloh, Perryville and Stones River.⁴⁵

Thomas apparently enjoyed a "most trusted" status with the army commander. Thomas and Rosecrans knew each other since West Point and were fast friends. Rosecrans also deeply respected Thomas. He believed that Thomas had a keen eye for strategy, had the character of George Washington, and was absolutely trustworthy.⁴⁶

After assuming command of the Army of the Cumberland, Rosecrans initiated the practice of conducting frequent evening discussions with his corps commanders. Rosecrans acquired the habit of calling on Thomas prior to making any critical decisions that would come out in the evening discussions. Even if time was not available for a consultation with all corps commanders, Rosecrans almost always consulted Thomas.⁴⁷

Major General Alexander McDowell McCook, commander of XX Corps, was born in Ohio in 1831. He spent five years, instead of the normal four, at West Point and graduated in 1852 as a lieutenant of infantry. He served an uneventful career of fighting in the Indian wars in New Mexico, and by 1858 returned to the Military Academy to teach tactics.⁴⁸

When the Civil War began, McCook left his instructor duties and returned to Ohio to serve as a colonel in the 1st Ohio Infantry Regiment. Prior to the Tullahoma campaign he

fought at First Manassass as a brigade commander, at Shiloh as a division commander and at Perryville and Stones River as a corps commander. At Stones River his corps comprised the right wing of the army and suffered the brunt of the Confederate attack, but fought bravely and managed to avoid disaster.⁴⁹

Rosecrans did not hold McCook in particularly high esteem. Rosecrans believed McCook to be a political, pushy and boyish individual. McCook impressed Rosecrans as one who was not serious about his profession and prone to joking when there was a need for attentiveness. Furthermore, Rosecrans did not believe that McCook was capable of deep reasoning and sound decisionmaking.⁵⁰ This may explain why McCook inevitably was kept in close proximity to Thomas and Rosecrans during the advance on Tullahoma.

Major General Thomas L. Crittenden, XXI Corps commander, was born in Kentucky in May of 1819. Crittenden, unlike his fellow corps commanders in the Army of the Cumberland, did not attend West Point. He became a lawyer in 1840 and practiced law until the outbreak of the Mexican War when he enlisted in the army. Crittenden attained the rank of colonel during war and eventually took command of a regiment.⁵¹

With the declaration of war, Crittenden sided with the Union and took command of all Kentucky militia still loyal to the United States.⁵² In September 1861 Crittenden

received a commission as a brigadier general of volunteers. He later fought at Shiloh and Corinth as a brigade and division commander. By the fall of 1862, Major General Crittenden assumed command of one of the three army corps in Buell's army.⁵³ His force became the XXI Army Corps when Rosecrans assumed command from Buell and redesignated the Army of the Ohio as the Army of the Cumberland.

Crittenden enjoyed the reputation of being a warrior and his men harbored great respect for him. Rosecrans believed Crittenden's intentions were good and that he discharged his duty to his fullest ability. Rosecrans, however, was somewhat concerned about Crittenden's lack of formal military education.⁵⁴ In spite of any reservations, Rosecrans would give Crittenden an important role in the Tullahoma Campaign.

The Reserve Corps commander was Major General Gordon Granger. Born in New York state in November of 1822, he graduated from West Point as an artillery officer in 1845. Granger served initially in the western frontier then, with the opening of the war with Mexico, went south with Winfield Scott's army. Following the Mexican War, Granger returned to serve in the western frontier in a mounted infantry regiment.⁵⁵

Granger's first Civil War action was as a regimental commander at Wilson's Creek, Missouri in August of 1861. Following this he led a brigade at New Madrid, Island No. 10

and the siege at Corinth. In the spring of 1863 he joined the Army of the Cumberland as the Reserve Corps commander.⁵⁶

Granger was noted for his independent character, although his independence periodically skirted insubordination. In spite of Granger's demonstrated independence and drive, Rosecrans suspected Granger might lack the drive to see actions through, particularly if the action in question did not benefit Granger.⁵⁷

Rosecrans' Chief of Cavalry and commander of the Cavalry Corps, Major General David S. Stanley, was born in Ohio in June of 1828. Stanley graduated West Point in 1852 as a cavalry officer. He served all of his pre-Civil War service in the western frontier.⁵⁸

When the Civil War came, Stanley, although offered a commission in the Confederate Army, elected to stay with the Union. He served initially as a cavalry company commander in the Missouri campaign and participated in the action at Wilson's Creek. Following this, Stanley commanded a division in the battles at New Madrid, Island No. 10, Iuka and Corinth. Over the course of his service at Iuka and Corinth Stanley impressed Rosecrans as a proficient cavalry officer. In recognition of Stanley's contributions Rosecrans appointed now Major General Stanley as the Chief of Cavalry for the Army of the Cumberland.⁵⁹

THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE

Braxton Bragg, the commander of the Army of Tennessee, was born in North Carolina in 1817. Raised in a large family, with no money for college, Bragg sought an appointment to the United States Military Academy. He entered the Academy in 1833 and was considered an excellent, though somewhat moody, student. Bragg graduated a lieutenant of artillery in 1837, the fifth of 50 cadets in his class.⁶⁰

After graduation Bragg was assigned to the 3rd United States Artillery. At various times between 1830 and 1843 Bragg participated in campaigns against the Seminole Indians in Florida. It was during this time period that Bragg developed the first of many illnesses, dysentery.⁶¹

Bragg fought in all the major battles of the Mexican War as an artillery commander and finished the war as a Brevet Lieutenant Colonel. He was an extremely brave leader. His most notable action occurred during the Battle of Buena Vista in 1847. It was here that Bragg earned Jefferson Davis' respect and lasting gratitude. During a desperate moment in the battle, when all that stood between the Mexican Army and the American army's rear was Davis' regiment, Bragg wheeled his artillery battery into position just in time to save Davis' command. Throughout the battle Bragg held his ground against heavy odds and prevented a Mexican breakthrough. Davis later remarked that had it not

been for Bragg's gallantry under fire that the American army would have surely suffered defeat.⁶²

After the Mexican War Bragg served on the frontier performing various routine duties. By 1856 Bragg, then a lieutenant colonel and frustrated with chasing Indians and not getting choice assignments, resigned from the army. He became a planter in Louisiana where he remained until the opening of the Civil War.

With the coming of the Civil War Bragg joined the Confederacy as a brigadier general in the Provisional Army of the Confederate States. During the first months of the war he served as coastal commander for all land forces from Pensacola to Mobile. It was in this capacity that Bragg once again bolstered his reputation with Jefferson Davis. Davis commented favorably on Bragg's performance and remarked that Bragg was the only general in the Confederate army who accomplished what he set out to do.⁶³

By September, 1861 Bragg received a promotion to Major General and assumed command of General Albert Sidney Johnston's Second Army Corps in the Army of Mississippi. Bragg fought his first major battle as a corps commander at Shiloh in April 1862. During the battle Johnston fell fatally wounded and Bragg controlled the battle for a time until General P.G.T. Beauregard could take command. For his bravery at Shiloh, Bragg was promoted to full General with an effective date of 6 April 1862.⁶⁴

In June 1862, Bragg replaced P.G.T. Beauregard as the commander of the Army of Mississippi. Bragg then devised an invasion plan for Kentucky. In October of 1862 Bragg's army, now called the Army of Tennessee gathered at Perryville, Kentucky and engaged Union forces under Major General Don Carlos Buell. Although Perryville was largely a tactical draw, Bragg ordered a retreat from the field and withdrew from the state allowing the North to claim a victory.⁶⁵

As a result of his failed Kentucky campaign, Bragg was left with little choice but to reestablish a defensive line in Tennessee. His presence near Murfreesboro and Rosecrans' advance south precipitated the Battle of Stones River from 31 December 1862 - 2 January 1863. Once again, despite the lack of clear tactical defeat, Bragg withdrew from the field. He had not thought out plans in the event the battle lasted longer than a day. As a result he improvised movements poorly, which allowed Rosecrans to hold the field. He then moved his army south of the low foothills of middle Tennessee, and deployed his army along the Duck River line, with headquarters at Tullahoma.

Bragg's reputation during the first half of 1863 was much less favorable than that of his Federal counterpart. While Bragg's reputation, like Rosecrans, was somewhat mixed, the differences of opinion held by those associated with Bragg were more pronounced. Interestingly, Bragg's

superiors [Davis, Seddon and General Samuel Cooper] tolerated him, and with some reservation, judged Bragg capable of continued high command. This toleration of Bragg was for two reasons. Bragg had demonstrated exceptional abilities in previous campaigns, notably Shiloh, and at the moment, other than Joseph Johnston, there was no one better in Davis' mind to replace Bragg. Most of Bragg's subordinates, however, questioned his competence. His corps and division commanders disliked Bragg personally and lacked confidence in his ability to lead the Army of Tennessee to victory.⁶⁶

This lack of confidence stemmed partly from Bragg's propensity to retreat in the face of victory. An attitude of disgust permeated Bragg's subordinates after the "defeats" at Perryville and Stones River. After Stones River, Bragg asked his commanders for a vote of confidence. While some of his subordinates were more tactful than others, all agreed a change of commander would be good for the army. As a result of this and Bragg's failure to exploit success, Bragg's subordinates lobbied their contacts for a new commander for the Army of Tennessee.⁶⁷

Bragg remained in command in spite of the clamorings for his relief and the low state of morale among his officers. This is not to say that Richmond was totally ambivalent about the situation. Davis personally visited Bragg at Murfreesboro in December of 1862 after hearing of

discontent in Bragg's army. After Bragg's withdrawal from Murfreesboro Davis ordered General Joseph Johnston to Tullahoma to visit Bragg and, if necessary, take command. Davis and Seddon apparently believed by this point in the war that Bragg might need relief and Johnston, by virtue of his position, could take command and later advise Davis. Still, Johnston found conditions satisfactory and Bragg was not relieved. The air of dissatisfaction and low morale continued to pervade his army.⁶⁸

Although Johnston told Davis that Bragg would remain in command and left for Mobile, he had not been gone a month, when on 9 March Davis ordered Johnston to proceed to Tullahoma and assume command of Bragg's army. When Johnston arrived he found Bragg in troubled spirits. Bragg's wife was ailing and Bragg felt he should go to her. Johnston, not telling Bragg that he was in Tullahoma to assume command, agreed and took over for Bragg. A month later Bragg returned to find Johnston too ill to command. Bragg therefore resumed his role as commander of the Army of Tennessee. Bragg would remain in command through the Battle for Chattanooga in November 1863.⁶⁹

Johnston's refusal to take command of the army from Bragg was a result of his respect for Bragg. Based on Bragg's Mexican War reputation and his demonstrated abilities early in the Civil War, Johnston considered Bragg a capable commander. He was also aware that Bragg

reciprocated this respect. Johnston knew that it was Bragg who had lobbied the hardest for him to become the commander of all Confederate armies in the west. The mutual respect shared by Johnston and Bragg was a major factor in Johnston's reluctance to relieve Bragg.⁷⁰

Part of the reason for defeats, and subsequent retreats, lay with Bragg's indecisive nature. In practically every case, Bragg was capable of putting together a viable plan of action prior to a campaign or battle. However, Bragg inevitably wavered at the first hint of a problem in executing the plan. He was indecisive, rather than flexible.⁷¹

This indecisiveness likely stemmed from Bragg's fear of making mistakes. The situation Bragg found himself in as the commander of the Army of Tennessee was unenviable to say the least. His army did not enjoy a high priority for reinforcements or supplies, yet by the fall of 1862 carried the burden of action in Kentucky and Tennessee. Davis' insistence that the Federals must not gain access into Tennessee placed great pressure on Bragg to perform. As a result, Bragg searched hungrily for the options that would preserve his army and, at the same time, deny the Federals access to the land they doggedly sought. This, in turn, created a fear in Bragg that what he might do would fail. As events unfolded during a battle Bragg often changed his mind because of the fear he might have made a mistake.

Bragg's subordinates disliked and distrusted him. Many of Bragg's officers considered him harsh at times, quarrelsome, without compassion and unable to appreciate the human side of life. Bragg's character even made its effects felt all the way down to the men.⁷² A private in Bragg's army best described how the men felt about Bragg:

None of General Bragg's soldiers ever loved him. They had no faith in his ability as a general. He was looked upon as a merciless tyrant. . . . He [Bragg] loved to crush the spirits of his men. The more of a hangdog look they had about them the better was General Bragg pleased. Not a single soldier in the whole army ever loved or respected him.⁷³

Bragg was a strict disciplinarian and believed in adherence to the regulations. At one point a regiment of Tennessee volunteers insisted that they had the right to leave when their term of enlistment expired. Bragg stated simply that there would not be mutiny or desertion. The day of reckoning came and Bragg ordered up a battery of artillery to force the men to remain in the service.⁷⁴

Bragg's reputation as the most argumentative man in the whole Confederate army haunted him long before the Civil War. A popular story, recounted in Grant's memoirs, referred to a time when Bragg was both the quartermaster and a company commander at a post in the army. One day as a company commander Bragg requisitioned something from the quartermaster. As the quartermaster he refused it to the company commander (himself). When Bragg took the matter to

the post commander for resolution, the commander, well aware of Bragg's nature, exclaimed that not only had Bragg argued with everyone in the army, but now he was arguing with himself.⁷⁵

To his credit Bragg was a good organizer, understood the value of discipline, and appreciated the need for drill. He did much to improve the Army of Tennessee in this regard. Unfortunately for Bragg, it was his harsh methods, lack of tact and unflinching adherence to the regulations that lost what he so hungrily sought; the respect and love of his soldiers.

Bragg simply could not deal with individuals on an interpersonal level. He had an irritable and impatient nature. This abrasive nature could infuriate friend and enemy alike. Bragg publicly humiliated his subordinates. Perhaps even more importantly, he seemed to cultivate enemies. They provided Bragg with ready scapegoats for failures.⁷⁶

Lastly, Bragg suffered from a diversity of ailments that likely contributed to his foul personality. He suffered from frequent bouts of dysentery, dyspepsia and terrible migraine headaches. He ate very sparingly and slept little, although he was still capable of functioning at a much higher degree than many of those around him.⁷⁷

It is little wonder that Bragg had such difficulty dealing with subordinates. It is perhaps amazing that in

spite of the terrible dissension within his army, he remained in command for as long as he did. The answer to his continued command goes beyond his reputation with Davis and Johnston. Bragg might be the lesser of the possible evils confronting the Confederacy. For Bragg, like his superiors, had crosses to bear. Some of his subordinates would try the most patient of men.

One such man was corps commander, Lieutenant General Leonidas L. Polk. Polk was born in Raleigh, North Carolina in April 1806. He attended West Point and graduated in 1827. While there he met Jefferson Davis and the two men developed a deep friendship that would have important consequences during the Civil War.⁷⁸

After six months of active duty, Polk resigned his commission and entered the Episcopal ministry. By the start of the Civil War Polk was the Southwest Missionary Bishop in Louisiana. Answering the call to arms, Polk reentered the army as a Confederate major general.⁷⁹

Polk initially commanded Military Department Number 2 in the expansive area which stretched from Kentucky to the Mississippi River and organized the Army of Mississippi (later to become the Army of Tennessee). By late 1861, when General Albert S. Johnston succeeded Polk in command of the Army of Mississippi, Polk became a corps commander. He fought in every major campaign of the Army of Tennessee until killed at Pine Mountain, Georgia in 1864.⁸⁰

As a leader Polk lacked tactical skill and aggressiveness. He was lavish in his appetites and dress. He had the irksome quality of obeying only those orders that suited him. Bragg thought at times Polk's slowness and selective compliance was insubordinate. Polk did, however, have one very special thing in his favor. He was not only a good friend of Davis but possessed a sizable following in Richmond.⁸¹

Because of this special relationship with Davis and others in Richmond, Polk enjoyed great power in and out of the army. Additionally, he was extremely kind toward his soldiers, which strengthened his power base from below. Polk believed himself to be the overseer of the Army of Tennessee and as such he felt it his duty to protect it from ruin by the incompetent command of Bragg. When it appeared to Polk that Bragg would destroy the army he went over Bragg's head and issued his complaints directly to President Davis in Richmond.⁸²

Polk first began to take matters directly to Richmond after the failed Kentucky invasion. After the failure at Stone River, Polk wrote directly to Davis and recommended Joseph Johnston take command of the army. Polk wrote Davis yet again in March of 1863 expressing his view that Bragg might be of better service elsewhere.⁸³

Bragg was not blind to Polk's maneuverings and Polk's behavior widened the rift between the two men. Bragg

suspected Polk was instigating ill feeling toward him. By May of 1863, Bragg charged Polk with disobedience at Perryville and Polk, fearful of arrest, renewed his efforts to consolidate support for his defense. Bragg and Polk's animosity damaged the Army of Tennessee as it prepared to meet Rosecrans in Middle Tennessee.⁸⁴

Bragg's second corps commander was Lieutenant General William J. Hardee. Born in Camden County, Georgia in October of 1815, he graduated West Point in 1838. He fought in the Indian Wars as an infantry company commander and later served in Mexico where he received two promotions for bravery.⁸⁵ After the Mexican War Hardee served as the commandant of cadets at West Point where he wrote his renowned textbook entitled Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics. This highly regarded manual was used by both sides during the Civil War.⁸⁶

When Georgia seceded from the Union, Hardee resigned his commission in the U.S. Army to become a colonel in the Confederate army. By October of 1861 he was a major general. He fought as a division commander under A.S. Johnston at Shiloh. Following Shiloh, Hardee became a wing commander in the army and fought in the battles at Perryville and Stones River.⁸⁷

Most army officers believed Hardee to be a sound tactician and resolute fighter and his subordinate commanders and men respected and admired him. Indeed,

Hardee's influence within the army stemmed more from his proficiency than from political connections. In every battle he exhibited great personal courage. He also understood the value of terrain and consistently apprised Bragg of such facts.⁸⁸

Though very different from Polk, he showed the same dislike of Bragg. Hardee also incurred Bragg's wrath and distrust after the failure of the Kentucky campaign and the retreat from Murfreesboro. Hardee, like many others disgusted with Bragg's command style, eventually fell into the anti-Bragg faction with Polk.⁸⁹ After Perryville he openly criticized Bragg's performance in front of the other officers. After Stones River, Hardee candidly wrote Bragg that in his opinion Bragg no longer enjoyed the confidence of the army and that a change was necessary.⁹⁰

Faced with such honesty on the part of a subordinate, Bragg remained at odds with Hardee until he was transferred later in the year. In Bragg's eyes, Hardee was nothing more than a troublemaker, who enjoyed criticizing his superiors, but accepted little, if any, responsibility himself. Bragg's vocal opinions of Hardee, however, did little more than drive more fence-sitters into the anti-Bragg camp.⁹¹

Bragg's relationship with his cavalrymen was hardly better. Continued infighting among the cavalry leadership and their penchant for failing to provide Bragg with

detailed intelligence at critical times caused Bragg a great deal of consternation. Bragg did, however, hold a high opinion of his senior cavalryman.⁹²

Major General Joseph Wheeler, Bragg's chief of cavalry, graduated West Point and graduated in 1859 at the age of 22. In April of 1861 he resigned his commission, and in less than two years was a Confederate major general. Initially, he fought as a regimental commander of infantry at Shiloh, shortly thereafter transferred to cavalry and became the chief of cavalry for the Army of Tennessee.⁹³

Wheeler was in almost constant combat from July of 1862 until the end of the war. He participated in virtually every battle and skirmish the Army of Tennessee fought. A dangerous fighter who loved action, Wheeler lost 36 staff officers to enemy fire during the war. He had a reputation perhaps second only to Forrest and enjoyed Bragg's enduring respect.⁹⁴

While Bragg thought highly of Wheeler the other commanders in the army were less gracious. This feeling was more pronounced within the cavalry. At the age of 25 Wheeler was junior in years to every cavalry general he commanded. Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest and Brigadier General John Morgan in particular disliked serving under him. They believed he was too impatient and not adept at devising independent operations. In fact, after the attack by Forrest and Wheeler on Fort Donelson in February

of 1863, Forrest swore he would never take orders from Wheeler again. Morgan for his part tried and was eventually successful in escaping Wheeler's command.⁹⁵

Nathan Bedford Forrest was perhaps the best general in Bragg's army, yet he was self-taught in the art of warfare. Born in Bedford County, Tennessee on 13 July 1821, Forrest received little formal education. Despite this humble beginning he became a successful planter and slave dealer prior to the Civil War. After enlisting in the Confederate army in early 1861 as a private, Forrest equipped a battalion of cavalry at his own expense and became its commander. During the siege at Fort Donelson in 1862 Forrest received permission to escape with his men rather than surrender. Prior to Shiloh, the 3rd Tennessee elected Forrest colonel of the regiment. By July of 1862 Forrest received promotion to brigadier general and took command of a cavalry division. Throughout the later months of 1862, Forrest's cavalry harassed Grant's communications in West Tennessee.⁹⁶

Despite Forrest's successes, Bragg never considered him anything more than a partisan raider, devoid of the capability for higher command. The close relationship Bragg enjoyed with Wheeler probably did not help since Forrest detested Wheeler and openly showed it. This behavior probably contributed to the ill feelings between Bragg and Forrest.⁹⁷

ROSECRANS' PLAN

In late October 1862, shortly after taking command of the Army of the Cumberland from Buell, Rosecrans received his orders from Halleck. Halleck directed Rosecrans to apply pressure on Bragg to force the Army of Tennessee out of Kentucky. Halleck also directed Rosecrans to cover Nashville and repair and secure the railroad to permit the movement of supplies between Nashville and Louisville. Additionally, Halleck informed Rosecrans that it was necessary to remain actively employed and keep the pressure on Bragg to prevent the Army of Tennessee from moving west to affect Grant's operations. In these orders Halleck also provided Rosecrans with two "great objectives" for the operations in Tennessee. Specifically, Rosecrans was to first move his army to drive the rebels out of Kentucky and Middle Tennessee. Second, he was ". . .to take and hold East Tennessee, cutting the line of railroad at Chattanooga, Cleveland, or Athens, so as to destroy the connection of the valley of Virginia with Georgia and the other Southern states."⁹⁸

By the end of January Rosecrans, already developing a reputation for slowness, achieved only the first portion of Halleck's directions. Rosecrans had moved into Tennessee and pushed Bragg south. Bragg, however, still had a grasp on Middle Tennessee and it remained for Rosecrans to expel him.

Rosecrans delayed the better part of six months before attempting to remove Bragg from Tennessee for four basic reasons. First, Rosecrans' army was greatly depleted in supplies, wagon transport and cavalry, a situation that required rectification before moving on. Rosecrans' goal was to have enough supplies on hand to fight two great battles. Second, Rosecrans stated that he must secure his lines of communication before advancing, which required additional troops to guard the 185 miles between Louisville and Murfreesboro. Third, the extremely wet winter and the spring weather made roads impassible until May. Lastly, Rosecrans suggested he might actually be accomplishing part of his mission - support of Grant - by remaining in position. Rosecrans feared that the Confederates might be willing to sacrifice Middle Tennessee, and go to Pemberton's aid if threatened by an advance. Alternatively, Rosecrans suggested that an advance might have the ill effect of forcing Bragg's already depleted forces back to a better defensive line at Chattanooga. From Chattanooga fewer men could defend and Bragg could slip reinforcements west.⁹⁹

Whatever Rosecrans' reasons for delay it is clear that it was not for the lack of planning. Indications are that Rosecrans knew well before June what he intended to do and how he wanted to do it. It is unlikely, however, that anyone in his command with the possible exception of Thomas knew the details of the plans prior to 22 or 23 June 1863.

Rosecrans stated years later that in May he divulged the plans to Brigadier General Hartsuff (Burnside's deputy operating with forces north and east of Rosecrans). However, Rosecrans was quick to point out that he gave the details of his plan to no one else.¹⁰⁰

Much of Rosecrans' hesitancy to inform his subordinates about the campaign design stemmed from a fear that a loose tongue might allow the enemy to gain knowledge of the plan. Rosecrans was well aware that "nonmilitary enemies" (spies and southern sympathizers) occupied his area of operations and from time to time passed information to the enemy. He was also aware that there might be a number of uniformed soldiers and officers in his command who were spies. An incident in early May confirmed this suspicion. At that time Brigadier General John Turchin's cavalry brigade captured two Confederate officers posing as inspectors. The two men possessed false orders from Washington, D.C. and Rosecrans' headquarters authorizing them to inspect all Federal positions. The inherent danger in situations such as this did much to curtail Rosecrans' issuance of orders well before an event.¹⁰¹

Based on Halleck's guidance Rosecrans deemed it necessary to drive the Rebels not only out of Middle Tennessee, but out of Chattanooga and beyond. Chattanooga was a key railhub for traffic northeast to Virginia, southeast to Atlanta, and west to Memphis. Loss of the

Chattanooga area would make it virtually impossible for the Confederates to move men swiftly west to Vicksburg or east to Virginia. Rosecrans established a phased plan to wrest the rail line from the Confederates. His plan for the overall operation follows:

First: We must follow the line of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad [For the purposes of logistics].

Second: We must surprise and manoeuvre Bragg out of his intrenched camps by moving over routes east of him to seize the line of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad in his rear; beat him if he fights, and follow and damage him as best we can, until we see him across the Tennessee.

Third: We must deceive him as to the point of our crossing of the Tennessee and securely establish ourselves on the south side.

Fourth: We must then manoeuvre him out of Chattanooga, get between him and that point, and fight him, if possible, on ground of our own choosing, and if not, upon such ground as we can.

Fifth: Burnside must follow and guard the left flank of our movement, especially when we get into the mountains. His entrance into East Tennessee will lead Bragg's attention to Chattanooga and northward, while we cross below that point.

Sixth: Since our forces in the rear of Vicksburg would be endangered by General Joseph E. Johnston, if he should have enough troops, we must not drive Bragg out of Middle Tennessee until it shall be too late for his command to reenforce Johnston's.¹⁰²

This operational scheme extends beyond the scope of this study, however, it demonstrates Rosecrans was looking much further ahead than the mere removal of Bragg from Tennessee. This scheme points out some key considerations. First, Rosecrans oriented on the Nashville and Chattanooga

Railroad to protect and sustain his replenishment and at the same time looked to cut Bragg's line of communications. Second, this scheme further explains Rosecrans' desire not to move too early. Rosecrans deduced that by forcing Bragg to keep the Army of the Cumberland in check, this actually helped preclude reinforcing Vicksburg.¹⁰³

A third and significant point is that Rosecrans was under orders from Halleck to cooperate with Burnside. Burnside too was not ready to move until June. Rosecrans did not dare move until assured that his left flank was protected, though Halleck almost undid the plan. In the first week of June he ordered Burnside to provide forces to Grant at the very time Burnside was preparing to advance, which caused Rosecrans and Burnside to delay further to assess the impact.¹⁰⁴

Understanding what Rosecrans intended to do in the long term, one can now appreciate the following explanation of Rosecrans' plan. Rosecrans planned to conduct the first two phases of his grander scheme as part of the Middle Tennessee or Tullahoma campaign. After months of reconnaissance and study of Bragg's defenses, Rosecrans determined a frontal assault would be too hazardous. An assault against Shelbyville would also allow Bragg a safe line of retreat through the narrow roads that moved up over the Barrens and south to Chattanooga. Ever mindful of Bragg's supposed superiority in cavalry Rosecrans also

assumed that Bragg could keep his railroad open during a retreat.¹⁰⁵

Rosecrans, therefore, envisioned a two part plan to rid Middle Tennessee of Bragg. The first part of his plan would entail the deployment of forces to deceive Bragg about the location of the main attack, thereby forcing Bragg out of his entrenchments along the Duck River line. The second part of Rosecrans' plan, never realized during the campaign, entailed cutting Bragg's line of communication by moving on the railroad bridge over the Elk River which would cause Bragg to retreat on a disadvantageous line. While the second part of the plan risked battle with Bragg, if he fought, this was not Halleck's primary charter to Rosecrans. Rosecrans' instructions from Halleck established clearly that driving Bragg out of Middle Tennessee was the main objective and Rosecrans' plan reflected this as the primary mission. This did not mean, however, Rosecrans' plan ignored Bragg's army. Rosecrans clearly envisioned the possibility of fighting Bragg in Tennessee to destroy Bragg's army if Bragg fought. Rosecrans' plan of maneuver, however, oriented primarily on a geographical objective and addressed the enemy only from a contingency perspective.¹⁰⁶

To accomplish his plan Rosecrans felt it necessary to convey that the Union main effort would advance on the Shelbyville route. The main effort, however, would actually go on the Manchester Pike through Hoover's Gap

south to Manchester. From Manchester, the army could threaten Bragg's flank and his line of retreat. This maneuver, by enveloping Bragg's right flank, would hopefully force Bragg to leave his entrenchments and retreat. In accordance with this scheme, Rosecrans intended to move Granger's command to Triune and on toward Christiana to threaten Shelbyville. A small infantry and cavalry force would advance simultaneously with this feint and head east toward Woodbury. Rosecrans believed the force advancing on Woodbury would appear to Bragg as a feint, designed to cover the perceived main attack on Shelbyville. In the meantime two of Rosecrans army corps would force the gaps and pass to the east of the main entrenchments.¹⁰⁷

Once Rosecrans enveloped Bragg's right flank, the envelopment would become a turning movement that would force Bragg out of his defensive works. If Bragg chose to flee, as Rosecrans hoped he would, Rosecrans would deny Bragg the best withdrawal routes. Rosecrans could then use the better routes to pursue Bragg's army thereby driving him out of Tennessee. If Bragg attempted to fight Rosecrans would draw Bragg into a one-sided battle. Rosecrans reasoned that whether Bragg fled or fought, the result would be the same, however, his emphasis was on gaining Middle Tennessee through maneuver not decisive combat.¹⁰⁸

BRAGG'S PLAN

Bragg, unlike his counterpart to the north, did not receive much in the way of long range guidance from his superiors. In the early months of 1863, Bragg's immediate superior, General Joseph Johnston, was himself unsure of Richmond's expectations for Middle Tennessee. Johnston and Bragg seemed to have agreed on a form of defensive/offensive strategy. In other words, Bragg's army would remain initially on the defense and attack only if a clear opportunity presented itself. This strategy, however, was not articulated well and it served as a source of confusion for Bragg's subordinates. By May, it seemed that the situation had not improved. Johnston, now in Mississippi, was more absorbed with Vicksburg and its situation than with developing a strategy with Bragg. Furthermore, during the month of May Johnston incorrectly believed he did not command Bragg's department.¹⁰⁹

Without specific direction from Richmond or Johnston, Bragg had to deduce what he was expected to do in Middle Tennessee; which he believed was simply to defend and prevent the capture of Chattanooga.¹¹⁰ To do this Bragg felt it would be far better to remain in prepared works. From the defensive works Bragg could fend off Rosecrans, deny him the railroad and avoid decisive defeat on an open field of battle. Bragg's rationale for defense, however, went beyond Davis' unwillingness to lose ground. His

reliance on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, a belief that his presence could check Rosecrans and the continual siphoning of troops from Bragg were all possible contributors to the need to defend.¹¹¹

During his defensive planning it is also apparent that Bragg considered Rosecrans' likely objectives. It is also obvious that Bragg, concerned with security of his lines of communication still looked at opportunities for a counterstroke.

Bragg relied on two means to sustain his army. The bulk of his sustainment came from what the army could forage in the surrounding areas. The rest came from whatever Bragg could eke out of the warehouses in Atlanta. These, however, were not part of Bragg's Department and the bulk of the supplies were earmarked for armies in the East. If Bragg resorted to an offensive it was likely he would find no sustenance in an area already stripped bare by both his army and that of Rosecrans. Furthermore, even if Bragg could find sustenance, he lacked the means to transport it.¹¹²

In terms of transportation it is important to note that the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad was important for two reasons. First, it represented the best means to move whatever supplies Bragg received from Chattanooga and Atlanta. Second, and more importantly, the railroad provided the quickest means to withdraw Bragg's army or receive reinforcements for it.

Bragg's troop strength represented another obstacle to offensive planning. While at Tullahoma, Bragg and Johnston managed to gather replacements for Bragg's army from other areas in the West. Additionally, Bragg received over 5000 soldiers as a result of General Gideon Pillow's conscription of men in Tennessee and Alabama. With these acquisitions Bragg received over 10,000 men between January and May of 1863. However, transfers of men from Bragg's command to the West, particularly in April and May, kept Bragg at basically the same strength he finished with at Stones River.¹¹³

Perhaps the most interesting reason for Bragg's continued defense was a parallel to Rosecrans' philosophy for not attacking Bragg. In a letter to his wife in early June, Bragg stated that his demonstrations and raidings behind Rosecrans' lines had the effect of checking Rosecrans. Bragg maintained that by remaining in Middle Tennessee, and thereby fixing Rosecrans' army, he prevented Rosecrans from shifting troops to aid Grant. Bragg also maintained that by defending and the occasional raiding, he concealed his own transfer of troops to the West. Traditional defense thus became Bragg's choice.¹¹⁴

Bragg's defensive line stretched over seventy miles across its front. Bragg was forced to spread out to forage and cover the approaches to Chattanooga. Bragg, however, knew that the better roads lay in front of Shelbyville and

traversed Guy's and Bellbuckle Gaps. The railroad that Rosecrans would use passed through Bellbuckle Gap. It made sense to Bragg that Rosecrans would need to follow the course of the railroad to secure it. Additionally, Bragg believed that the terrain to the east of Hoover's Gap, while passable, was too difficult and too far from Rosecrans' intended line to be a serious threat.¹¹⁵

Hardee, tasked with defending the right flank, took exception with Bragg's analysis. Hardee pointed out that Tullahoma and the defensive positions around it offered few advantages for a defense against Rosecrans. Hardee felt Tullahoma could be enveloped via the right flank. The enemy, he maintained, could come shallow on the Manchester - Decherd approach or come deep via the McMinnville - Pelham - Cowan approach. Of the two approaches, Hardee believed the first to be the most likely. He stated that Hoover's Gap and the road from Lumley's Stand provided a more direct route to Chattanooga than did the approach via Shelbyville. Hardee further stated that Tullahoma was too far west to prevent the Federals from continuing south once they gained Manchester. Hardee maintained Rosecrans would simply bypass Tullahoma in this case.¹¹⁶

Bragg disagreed and argued that Rosecrans would opt to take a more direct approach to reach Chattanooga. Bragg's belief stemmed from a continued pattern of Federal activity on the Confederate left flank during the spring.

On no less than three occasions, twice in March and once in April, the Federals conducted strong reconnaissances near Spring Hill and Guy's Gap respectively. Additionally, Bragg's intelligence confirmed that an attack on the right flank of the army was highly unlikely, as no Federal activity in the east had as yet been noted. Furthermore, Bragg reasoned, it made no sense for Rosecrans to move east away from his line of communications.¹¹⁷

In March Bragg developed a plan which offered an opportunity to maneuver. Bragg intended to use Tullahoma only as a position to fix Rosecrans. When Rosecrans attempted to continue south from Bellbuckle and to the east of Shelbyville he would be stopped by Hardee's forces in Tullahoma, then be susceptible to attack on his flank by Polk's corps from Shelbyville.¹¹⁸

Unfortunately for Bragg he could not make his two corps commanders understand the concept. Other than briefly outlining the concept of potential flank attacks, Bragg did not convey these ideas as orders. As a result, Hardee was confused as to his role, and even where he should position his forces. Polk, for his part, maintained he did not know anything of his role in a maneuver plan until it was ordered on the 26th of June.¹¹⁹

Hardee apparently thought he was not supposed to contest heavily attacks made by Union forces advancing east of Liberty Gap. Rather, he believed he should fall back to

Tullahoma if threatened and defend from the works therein. This is a likely explanation for Hardee's failure to defend well forward in strength at Hoover's and Liberty Gaps.¹²⁰

Apparently, Bragg also considered another alternative in his defense. In the unlikely event Rosecrans tried to flank to the west of Shelbyville, cross the Elk River, and proceed directly south of Shelbyville, Hardee could conduct a flank attack from his Wartrace position. Once again, however, it appears that neither Polk nor Hardee understood the details of this plan.¹²¹

This confused situation did not improve in the months between March and June. In fact, the discord within the leadership of the Army of Tennessee did anything but help foster an attitude of understanding or cooperation for the defensive plan. By June, Bragg's army was still sitting on the Duck River line with the preponderance of Bragg's forces in Shelbyville and Wartrace. The cavalry still covered the gaps. One difference did, however, exist that was not the case prior to June. Hardee received permission from Bragg to position infantry forces further north and closer to the gaps. After convincing Bragg of the necessity to cover the gaps with more force, Hardee positioned Brigadier General William Bate's brigade of Major General Alexander P. Stewart's division forward at Beech Grove. Hardee then moved the remainder of his corps (minus Lucius Polk's brigade of Cleburne's division) to Wartrace.¹²²

Such was the situation of the armies in Middle Tennessee as the summer campaign season opened. While Bragg's leaders feuded, Rosecrans planned his operation. While Bragg lost soldiers, Rosecrans gained strength and improved his cavalry capability. While Bragg pleaded for supplies to feed his army, Rosecrans stockpiled enough supplies for two great battles. The months of June and July would be momentous for the Union and would further frustrate the ailing fortunes of the Confederate armies in the West.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 2

¹Matthew Forney Steele, Civil War Atlas to Accompany Steele's American Campaigns (West Point, N.Y.: U.S. Military Academy Printing Office), 74.

²Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 392-94.

³Henry Steele Commager and John S. Bowman, The Civil War Almanac (New York: Gallery Books, 1983), 151-160.

⁴Richard M. McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 53.

⁵McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies 53.

⁶McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies 53-54; McMurry states it is possible Halleck believed that the Northern soldier procured from the Eastern Federal states was not as good as his Virginia counterpart or that he simply realized that the status quo had been reached in the East. Halleck also observed that the seizure of Richmond would take troops away from the Washington defenses. This was a distasteful thought to the politicians, not that Halleck was known to take their opinions seriously, but it nonetheless figured into his considerations.; Commager and Bowman, The Civil War Almanac 161.

⁷McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies 53; Halleck was known to be a believer in Jomini's theories of interior lines and strength against weakness. This knowledge and influence gleaned from Jomini possibly contributed to Halleck's philosophy of priority to the Western theater of war.

⁸James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 612; McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies 53.

⁹Hattaway and Jones, How the North Won, 384-85; The events by mid-1863 were to bear out the soundness of this rationale. Lee's concern for the Union threat in his theater caused him to persuade Davis that the Army of Northern Virginia could not afford to send forces to

Johnston in the West. Secretary Seddon prevailed on Johnston to take the soldiers he needed to aid Pemberton from Bragg's army and from the scattered garrisons in the West.

¹⁰McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies, 54; Grant's maneuverings during his 1864-65 campaign in Virginia were a manifestation of this policy. He would conduct his campaign primarily to keep Lee from sending troops to other areas, allow Sherman to advance without threat, and to satisfy the public opinion of the north which still desired a visible attempt to capture Richmond.

¹¹United States, The War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 128 Vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, Vol 23/2; Message from Halleck to Rosecrans, 30 Jan, 1863, 23; Message from Halleck to Burnside, 23 Mar, 1863, 162; Message from Halleck to Rosecrans, 25 Mar, 1863, 171; Message from Halleck to Burnside, 18 May, 1863, 337; Message from Halleck to Rosecrans, 3 Jun, 1863, 383. (Hereafter referred to as OR. Volume and part cited in Series I unless otherwise noted); Victor Hicken, Illinois in the Civil War (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 187; McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom 669.

¹²Thomas L. Connelly, Autumn of Glory (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 93; McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies, 57.

¹³OR 23/2: Johnston to Polk, 3 Mar. 1863, 659-60.

¹⁴Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee: A Military History (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941), 232.

¹⁵James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox (Secaucus, N.J.: The Blue and Grey Press, ND.), 327; Glenn Tucker, in Chickamauga: Bloody Battle of the West, mentions that Longstreet may have had designs on Bragg's command. This may have entered Longstreet's mind as a motivation for recommending the movement of his corps to Tennessee.

¹⁶Horn, The Army of Tennessee 232.

¹⁷OR 23/1: Army of Tennessee strength return for June 20, 1863, 585.

¹⁸OR 23/1: Army of the Cumberland strength return for month of June 1863, 411; Rosecrans' extensive Department of the Cumberland actually contained over 97,000 officers and men, however, the leaves, absences, and garrison details

left his fighting forces at Murfreesboro at just over 65,000.

¹⁹OR 23/1: Army of Tennessee strength return for June 20, 1863, 585; Army of the Cumberland strength return for the month of June 1863, 411.

²⁰Chief of Engineers, United States Army, Military Map of the Tullahoma, Chickamauga and Chattanooga Campaigns.

²¹Chief of Engineers, Military Map.

²²OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 404.

²³OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 404.

²⁴Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 112.

²⁵Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 134.

²⁶Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Blue (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 410; David L. Wilson, "William S. Rosecrans," in American Military Leaders, eds. Roger J. Spiller and Joseph G. Dawson III, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 263.

²⁷William M. Lamers, The Edge of Glory. A Biography of General William S. Rosecrans, U.S.A. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1961), 16; Wilson, "Rosecrans" in American Military Leaders, eds. Spiller and Dawson, 263; Warner, Generals in Blue, 410.

²⁸Lamers, Edge of Glory, 34; Wilson, "Rosecrans" in American Military Leaders, eds. Spiller and Dawson, 263; Warner, Generals in Blue, 411.

²⁹Lamers, Edge of Glory, 103-121; Wilson, "Rosecrans" in American Military Leaders, eds. Spiller and Dawson, 264.

³⁰Lamers, Edge of Glory, 103-121; Wilson, "Rosecrans" in American Military Leaders, eds. Spiller and Dawson, 264.

³¹Ulysses S. Grant, Ulysses S. Grant. Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Selected Letters 1839-1865 (Memoirs originally published New York: Charles Webster Co., 1885-6; Letters originally published by Southern University Press, 1967-85; this book represents the incorporation of both; New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1990), 282.

³²Wilson, "Rosecrans" in American Military Leaders, eds. Spiller and Dawson, 264; Warner, Generals in Blue, 411.

³³Bruce Catton, "At the Edge of Glory," American Heritage Magazine, February 1962, 109.

³⁴Lamers, Edge of Glory, 15.

³⁵OR 20/1: Bragg to Cooper; Bragg's report of Tullahoma Campaign, 665.

³⁶Lamers, Edge of Glory, 245.

³⁷Frank G. Carpenter, Personal Letters, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Carpenter Files in Staff Ride Office), 1.

³⁸Frank G. Carpenter, "With Old Rosey," The National Tribune 7 January 1892.

³⁹Grant, Memoirs, 282; Lamers, Edge of Glory, 4; Lamers, Edge of Glory, 4.

⁴⁰Lamers, Edge of Glory, 5.

⁴¹Hicken, Illinois in the Civil War, 187.

⁴²Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961; repr., Dayton, OH: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1984), 37.

⁴³John Fitch, Annals of the Army of the Cumberland, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1863), 56.

⁴⁴McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies, 34.

⁴⁵Warner, Generals in Blue, 501.

⁴⁶Thomas B. Van Horne, History of the Army of the Cumberland (Cincinnati: Ogden, Campbell and Co., 1875; reprinted, Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1988), 245.

⁴⁷Warner, Generals in Blue, 500; Van Horne, History, xiv, 245.

⁴⁸Warner, Generals in Blue, 294-5.

⁴⁹Fitch, Annals, 73-5.

⁵⁰William F.G. Shanks, Personal Recollections of Distinguished Generals, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866), 248-9.

⁵¹Warner, Generals in Blue, 100.

- ⁵²Warner, Generals in Blue, 100.
- ⁵³Van Horne, History, 184.
- ⁵⁴Shanks, Recollections, 249.
- ⁵⁵Warner, Generals in Blue, 181.
- ⁵⁶Warner, Generals in Blue, 181.
- ⁵⁷Oliver L. Spaulding, Jr., "William S. Rosecrans," in Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), Vol. XVI, 164.
- ⁵⁸Warner, Generals in Blue, 470.
- ⁵⁹Warner, Generals in Blue, 470.
- ⁶⁰Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 30; Henry Steele Commager and John S. Bowman, The Civil War Almanac (New York: Gallery Books, 1983), 313.
- ⁶¹Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat Vol. 1, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 27.
- ⁶²Warner, Generals in Gray, 30; Don C. Seitz, Braxton Bragg General of the Confederacy (Columbia, S.C.: the State Company, 1924), 9.
- ⁶³McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, 202.
- ⁶⁴Warner, Generals in Gray, 30; Seitz, Bragg, 104; McWhiney, Braxton Bragg, 202, 230-1.
- ⁶⁵Warner, Generals in Gray 30; Commager and Bowman, Almanac 316; Thomas L. Connelly, Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 183.
- ⁶⁶In February of 1863, Davis dispatched General Joseph Johnston on an inspection visit to determine the state of Bragg's army. He also desired Johnston to determine if Bragg was still fit for command. In his reports to Davis Johnston, satisfied that Bragg's army was in good spirits, stressed to Davis that Bragg was fit for command. OR 23/2: Johnston to Davis, 3 Feb. 1863, 624; Johnston to Davis, 12 Feb. 1863, 632; Others within the Army of Tennessee such as General Polk wrote to Davis and implored the president to relieve Bragg for the good of the army. OR 23/2: Polk to Davis, 30 Mar. 1863, 729.

⁶⁷A great deal of the problem was that the Army of Tennessee did achieve tactical successes. Bragg's tendency to overestimate the enemy inevitably led him to the conclusion to retreat from the field. This meant that a potentially beaten Union Army, who stayed on the field of battle, claimed the victory. Of additional importance are the attempts by Bragg's subordinates to seek his relief. After Perryville and Murfreesboro many of Bragg's subordinates wrote letters to Davis. OR 23/2: Polk to Davis, 30 Mar. 1863, 729. Others within Bragg's army such as Cheatham, Hardee, Withers, and Cleburne either openly told or wrote Bragg that his presence was no longer desirable and that he no longer had the confidence of the army. OR 20/2: Cleburne to Bragg, 3 Jan. 1863, 699; 20/1: Cheatham to Bragg, 13 Jan. 1863, 698; Horn, Tennessee 223; Connelly, Autumn of Glory 75-77.

⁶⁸OR 52/2: Davis to Johnston, 22 Jan. 1863, 410; Connelly, Autumn of Glory 40, 77.

⁶⁹William M. Polk, Leonidas Polk, Bishop and General Vol 2., (New York: Longmans Publishing Co., 1893), 298-9; OR 23/2: Johnston to Bragg, 10 Apr. 1863, 745-6.

⁷⁰Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, A Different Valor: The Story of General Joseph E. Johnston, C.S.A. (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), 162.

⁷¹Connelly, Autumn of Glory 71.

⁷²Connelly, Autumn of Glory 70; Horn, Tennessee 156.

⁷³Sam R. Watkins, "Co. Aytch," Maury Grays, First Tennessee Regiment (Nashville: Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House, 1882; repr. edition, Wilmington, North Carolina: Morningside, 1990), 98.

⁷⁴William Watson, Life in the Confederate Army (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), 368.

⁷⁵Grant, Memoirs 449-50.

⁷⁶Connelly, Autumn of Glory 69; Horn, Tennessee 157.

⁷⁷Tucker, Chickamauga 76, 79.

⁷⁸Warner, Generals in Gray 242; OR 20/2: General Order No. 143, 388.

⁷⁹Warner, Generals in Gray 242-3.

⁸⁰Warner, Generals in Gray 74.

⁸¹McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies 114; Letter from Bragg to his wife, 25 Sep. 1863, Bragg Papers.

⁸²Connelly, Autumn of Glory 20-1.

⁸³Connelly, Autumn of Glory 20-1, OR 20/1: Polk to Davis, 3 Feb. 1863, 698-9; Polk, Polk 296-7; OR 23/2: Polk to Davis, 30 Mar. 1863, 729-30.

⁸⁴Polk, Polk 309.

⁸⁵Commager and Bowman, Almanac 341; Warner, Generals in Gray 124.

⁸⁶Commager and Bowman, Almanac 341; Warner, Generals in Gray 124.

⁸⁷Commager and Bowman, Almanac 341; Warner, Generals in Gray 124.

⁸⁸Connelly, Autumn of Glory 21, 261-63, 304.

⁸⁹Connelly, Autumn of Glory 21.

⁹⁰Connelly, Autumn of Glory 22, 76, citing Hardee to Bragg, January 12, 1863, in William J. Hardee Papers, Alabama.

⁹¹Polk, Polk, II, 165., Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 23.

⁹²OR 23/1: Army of Tennessee Strength Return for June 20 and July 10, 1863, 585; Connelly, Autumn of Glory 116.

⁹³Warner, Generals in Gray 333.

⁹⁴Commager and Bowman, Almanac 390; Warner, Generals in Gray 333.

⁹⁵John Witherspoon Du Bose, General Joseph Wheeler and the Army of Tennessee (New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1912), 157-8; Connelly, Autumn of Glory 122-4.

⁹⁶Warner, Generals in Gray 92; Thomas Jordan and J. P. Pryor, the Campaigns of Lieutenant General N.B. Forrest (Dayton OH: Morningside Bookshop, 1977), 277-8.

⁹⁷Connelly, Autumn of Glory 27-9, 123.

⁹⁸William S. Rosecrans, "The Campaign for Chattanooga" Century Magazine, 34 (October 1887), 129; OR 16/2: Halleck to Rosecrans, 24 October 1862, 640-1.

⁹⁹Rosecrans, "Chattanooga," 129-30; Whitelaw Reid, Ohio in the War: Her Statesmen, Her Generals, and Soldiers (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach and Baldwin, 1868) 752.; OR24/3: Rosecrans to Halleck, June 2, 1863, 376.

¹⁰⁰Rosecrans, "Chattanooga," 130.

¹⁰¹Van Horne, Army of the Cumberland, 217, 297-8.

¹⁰²Rosecrans, "Chattanooga," 130; It is important to note that Rosecrans wrote this passage over 24 years after the campaign. There is a possibility that he wrote this in retrospect to play down his failures at Chickamauga, however, the available evidence in the Official Records does not contradict the first two points of the plan which were key to the campaign. Additionally, a review of the messages divulged no evidence to contradict what Rosecrans said he intended to do. Indeed, the available evidence indicates that Rosecrans conducted the Chickamauga campaign with the strategy he outlined in his article.

¹⁰³Rosecrans, "Chattanooga," 130; Tucker, Chickamauga, 44; Jerry Korn and the editors of Time-Life Books, The Fight For Chattanooga - Chickamauga to Missionary Ridge (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books Inc., 1985), 19.

¹⁰⁴OR 23/2: Halleck to Burnside, 23 March 1863, 162; Burnside to Rosecrans, 4 April 1863, 210; Halleck to Burnside, 27 April 1863, 284; Halleck to Burnside and Rosecrans, 18 May 1863, 337; Halleck to Burnside, 3 June 1863, 383.

¹⁰⁵Lamers, Edge of Glory, 277.

¹⁰⁶OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Halleck, 24 July 1863, 403-4.

¹⁰⁷OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Halleck, 24 July 1863, 404-5.

¹⁰⁸OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Halleck, 24 July 1863, 404-5.

¹⁰⁹Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 97; citing Davis to Johnston, 15 June 1863, in Johnston Papers, William and Mary.

¹¹⁰Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 110-113.

¹¹¹Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 110-113.

¹¹²OR 23/2: Seddon to Johnston, 3 March 1863, 657-8; Johnston to Seddon, 4 March 1863, 661; Guy to Ewell, 9 March 1863, 675; Banks to Ewell, 13 March 1863, 688-9; McMicken to Harvie, 3 March 1863, 764-5; Scherck to Harvie, 23 March 1863, 769.

¹¹³Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 109-10; OR 52/2: Personnel Return for the Army of Tennessee, January 1863, 472; 23/2: Personnel Return for the Army of Tennessee, June 1863, 873.

¹¹⁴Bragg, Bragg to Wife, 20 June 1863, Braxton Bragg Papers, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

¹¹⁵Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 116.

¹¹⁶OR 23/2: Hardee to Bragg, 26 Jan 1863, 617.

¹¹⁷Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 113-7.

¹¹⁸OR 23/2: W. P. Johnston to Davis, 15 April 1863, 760-1.

¹¹⁹Polk, Polk, II., 218-19.

¹²⁰OR 23/2: Roy to Stewart, 24 June 1863, 884.

¹²¹Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 113.

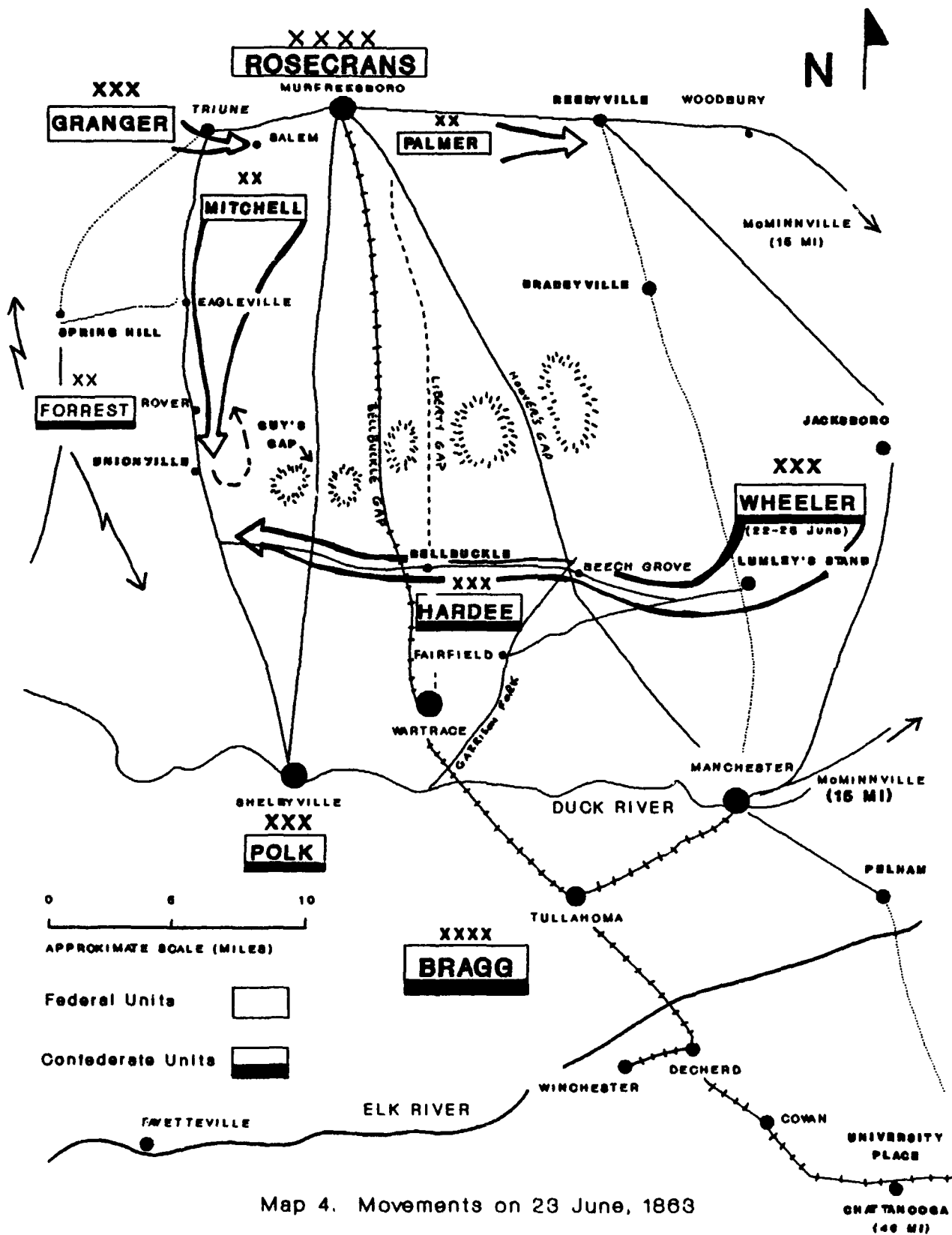
¹²²Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 118.

CHAPTER 3

THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS

When Burnside indicated his readiness to commence operations on 22 June 1863, Rosecrans was ready to move. With his operational plan in mind, Rosecrans issued specific orders at 2 A.M. on the morning of June 23, 1863. Rosecrans ordered Granger to move with his command at daylight from Triune to Salem (Map 4). Additionally, Rosecrans ordered Granger to send Mitchell's cavalry (recently attached to Granger) down the Eagleville and Shelbyville Pike to attack the enemy's cavalry. The intent of this maneuver was to push the Confederate cavalry and infantry screen back onto the main line at Shelbyville. This would convey to Bragg the idea of a main attack oriented on Polk's position at Shelbyville.¹

Concurrent with Granger's movement, Major General Palmer of Crittenden's corps, would advance east from Murfreesboro toward Woodbury and then turn south toward Bradeyville. Palmer's mission as the advance guard of the XXI Army Corps was two-fold. First, Palmer would seize the head of a defile leading up to the Barrens, and then continue on toward Manchester. Second, the maneuver would serve as a diversion designed to make Bragg think of it as a



feint. Bragg would not believe that Rosecrans would attempt maneuver in the broken terrain in the east and would think Rosecrans was attempting to trick him. Rosecrans hoped that Bragg would continue to believe Shelbyville was the object of the main attack.²

Rosecrans kept the rest of his army in readiness to advance, but issued no orders for Thomas and McCook to move. Rosecrans probably did this to help maintain a level of secrecy. Specific orders for Thomas and McCook on 23 June aimed only at making sure they drew adequate supplies and were capable of moving quickly when the word came.³

Movements commenced shortly after daylight on 23 June. Mitchell's cavalry division quickly drove south and made contact with the Confederate cavalry at Rover and pushed the Confederate cavalry out of the way after a sharp engagement near the town. After this fight Mitchell pursued the retreating enemy to Unionville where he made contact with cavalry from Wheeler's division and infantry from Polk's corps. Outnumbered, Mitchell broke off the engagement and pulled back to Rover for the night.⁴

It is important to note that prior to 22 June 1863 Wheeler had operated on the Confederate right flank. On 22 June, however, he received information that a strong Federal force was assembling on the Shelbyville front. In response to this information Wheeler moved the vast bulk of his cavalry command west to intercept the reported threat. He

left only one brigade of Brigadier General John A. Wharton's division to cover the ground between Hoover's Gap and Liberty Gap. On this brigade's right only one cavalry regiment remained in place to guard Hoover's Gap. To its right Wheeler left nothing.⁵

Moving parallel and behind Mitchell came Granger's corps. Granger, with one organic division under Brigadier General Absalom Baird and an attached division from Thomas under Brigadier General J. M. Brannan, moved from Triune to Salem. Palmer on the Union left flank began his movement as the advance of Crittenden's corps and moved east toward Woodbury.⁶

With these preliminary movements completed, Rosecrans called together his corps commanders on the evening of the 23 June. From his headquarters at Murfreesboro, Rosecrans outlined his plan for the continuance of the movements against Bragg. Granger would continue his feint on the Federal right with an advance toward Middleton (Map 5). As he moved, Granger would detach Brannan's division which would move to rejoin Thomas' corps. Stanley, with one brigade of Turchin's cavalry division, would link up with Mitchell at Versailles. Once joined, Stanley and Mitchell would conduct an attack in cooperation with Granger south toward Middleton and drive the enemy's cavalry before them. McCook would attack with his corps on the Shelbyville road, turn east and move two divisions (R.

Johnson and Jefferson C. Davis) toward Millersburg to seize and hold Liberty Gap. McCook's third division (Sheridan) would advance to Fosterville and cover Granger's eventual movement from Middleton to Christiana. Thomas' XIV Corps would advance on the Manchester Pike to seize and hold the advance toward Manchester. Additionally, Thomas would seize, if possible, Hoover's Gap. Crittenden would leave one division (Van Cleve's) to garrison Murfreesboro and move to Bradeyville with Palmer and Wood's divisions. One cavalry brigade under Turchin would join Crittenden and operate as his advance guard. Once at Bradeyville, Crittenden was to await further orders.⁷

THE FIGHT FOR THE GAPS

The morning of 24 June brought with it a continuous downpour. It was a rain that did not stop for seventeen consecutive days. Colonel John T. Wilder's mounted infantry brigade of Major General Joseph J. Reynold's division led on Thomas' axis. Unknown to Wilder he was about to make history and earn lasting praise for his action that day. At 3 A.M. Wilder's brigade moved forward on the Manchester Pike toward Hoover's Gap. By 5 A.M. McCook's corps was in motion toward Liberty Gap. On McCook's right Mitchell's cavalry moved toward Versailles. After receiving orders from Granger, Mitchell led his forces in a spirited attack against Middleton, which was occupied by cavalry from Wheeler's corps. To the north of Mitchell, Granger led his

infantry column south on the Shelbyville - Murfreesboro Pike toward Christiana. On the far left of the Union flank Crittenden's XXI Corps pushed forward at 7 A.M. toward their objective of Bradeyville.⁸

Thomas' forces were the first to seize their objectives for the day. Wilder's mounted infantry moved rapidly south toward Hoover's Gap. Once at the north end of the gap Wilder's orders were to attack through the gap to seize the narrow part located midway down the gap. Once there he was to wait for Reynold's infantry to come up before advancing further. By midmorning Wilder's brigade made contact with the Rebel cavalry located on the northern approach to Hoover's Gap. Wilder's brigade easily pushed the cavalry pickets aside and continued headlong into the gap. Wilder urged Lieutenant Colonel Kirkpatrick, in charge of a five company advance guard, to push on and prevent the enemy from occupying any fortifications in the gap. Kirkpatrick executed these orders promptly and his men followed him through the gap so rapidly that they prevented the enemy cavalry and signal stations from warning the enemy infantry of their approach.⁹

Wilder reached the narrow part of the gap at 12 noon with his main body. On Wilder's arrival at the gap he observed it was not defended as previously thought. He learned instead that a regiment of cavalry, the 1st and 3rd Kentucky Regiments Consolidated, occupied a position on the

Garrison Fork of the Duck River just south of the gap. Beyond this regiment was Bate's infantry brigade, of Major General A.P. Stewart's division, located two miles to the east of Garrison Fork, about three miles southwest of Beech Grove. Wilder determined at that moment to seize the entire length of the gap before the infantry brigade could respond. Unknown to Wilder, it would be some time before Bate responded because as yet he was unaware of Wilder's presence.¹⁰

Although Bate was close to Hoover's Gap and retreating Confederate cavalry rode past his position he initially knew nothing of the Federal advance. These cavalymen notified Stewart, located at least another mile west at Fairfield. At 2 P.M., Stewart ordered Bate to advance to Hoover's Gap.¹¹

Wilder certainly was not aware of this activity within Stewart's division. He concerned himself with taking the gap before Confederate reinforcements arrived and therefore ordered his brigade to continue to press forward. His initiative resulted in the capture of the entire length of Hoover's Gap by 12:30 P.M.. On reaching the terminus of the gap Wilder established a defensive position to prevent the Confederates from retaking the gap. Wilder then sent word to Reynolds that he could and would hold the gap until Reynolds could bring up the infantry.¹²

By 2 P.M. Bate, finally apprised of the situation and ready to take action, moved north to push back what he thought was Federal cavalry. As he moved forward he directed two of his regiments to move along lateral roads to protect his flanks. Bate continued northeast toward the gap with only three of his five regiments (700 men). Starting at 3:30 P.M. he mounted three determined, piecemealed attacks to dislodge Wilder but the heavy fire from Wilder's Spencers pushed Bate's infantry back after an hour-long engagement. The volume of fire caused Bate to believe he faced a "vastly superior force" and he thus established defensive positions. At 7 P.M., Stewart ordered Brigadier General Bushrod Johnson to relieve Bate's brigade and sent Bate to the rear to reorganize.¹³

Interestingly, Bate might have succeeded in his last attack had Wilder obeyed his new orders. Shortly after Bate's first effort, Wilder received orders from Reynolds to withdraw from the south end of the gap and await the infantry. In spite of the threat of arrest from Reynold's courier, Wilder refused to withdraw. He told Reynold's messenger that his men could hold their ground until relieved.¹⁴

Wilder's brigade did indeed hold its ground. Reynolds came forward at about 4 P.M. and seeing the situation ordered his remaining two brigades forward at once. Within an hour, two more regiments joined Wilder's

forces and by 7 P.M. the rest of the division arrived and extended the defensive line. Later that evening Major General Lovell H. Rousseau's division of Thomas' corps relieved Reynolds of the responsibility for the gap.

The rapid seizure of Hoover's Gap was quite unexpected. Rosecrans believed that, in all likelihood, it would take two days of heavy fighting to force the gap. Thomas believed his forces would not gain the gap for as many as three days and not without the loss of at least 2,000 casualties. The seizure of the gap, however, took only hours and Wilder's losses totaled merely 60 men, of which only 12 were killed in action.¹⁵

Why did Stewart's division defend the gap so poorly? Why did Hardee not direct Stewart to place infantry forces within the gap in the first place? Part of the answer to these questions lies in Bragg's overall plan to defend against Rosecrans' advance. Bragg's comparatively low troop strength, combined with the broad front he must cover, made economy of force a necessity. Bragg therefore positioned forces where he could shift them easily to support trouble spots along his line rather than string them out in fixed positions.¹⁶

Perhaps more important was Hardee's interpretation of Bragg's intentions. From the beginning of the occupation of the Duck River line, Hardee did not know exactly what Bragg wanted him to do. Bragg's vaguely communicated ideas

led Hardee to conclude that Bragg did not intend to prevent the Federals from passing into the Duck River Valley east of Liberty Gap. Rather, Hardee understood that if Rosecrans attempted to force Hoover's Gap Stewart should pull back to the vicinity of Wartrace and prepare to defend or conduct attacks into Rosecrans' flank. This was reflected in Hardee's orders to Stewart on 24 June. Hardee therefore made no effort to sharply defend a position from which he was to withdraw.¹⁷

There exists no evidence to show whether Bragg attempted to clarify Hardee's understanding. Possibly Bragg did not realize that Hardee did not understand the plan. Worse, it is possible Bragg simply failed to address the issue. This is possible in view of Bragg's belief that any efforts on the right would be no more than feints and that these could be countered by a defense at Tullahoma if necessary. More likely, however, ill-feeling between the two commanders probably prevented any effective communication about the issue.

The seizure of Liberty Gap proved to be a tougher mission for Rosecrans' forces than Hoover's Gap, even though the Confederate defensive plan of Liberty Gap was similar. The Confederate cavalry was to provide early warning and allow the infantry to position for the oncoming attack. However, unlike Hoover's Gap, the Confederate forces were better positioned initially.¹⁸

The defense of Liberty Gap fell to Major General Patrick Cleburne's division of Hardee's 2nd Army Corps. Cleburne, unlike Stewart in the east, stationed forces in the gap. Earlier in the month, Cleburne ordered one of his brigade commanders, Brigadier General St. John Liddell, to post strong pickets (two regiments) in Liberty Gap. In addition to Liddell's remaining regiments at Bellbuckle, Cleburne could reinforce Bellbuckle and Liberty Gaps with two additional brigades located with him at Wartrace some five miles from Liberty Gap.¹⁹

Cleburne's posting of infantry in the gaps was once again the result of Hardee's interpretation of Bragg's plan. Hardee understood that Bragg wanted them defended to prevent the Federals from supporting their main attack against the Shelbyville front. Hardee translated this successfully to Cleburne. Cleburne, in turn, ensured that an infantry force covered the gap.

At 12 noon, shortly after Wilder reached the narrow part of Hoover's Gap, McCook's XX Corps came into contact with enemy pickets north of Liberty Gap. The second division of XX Corps, under the command of Brigadier General Richard W. Johnson, easily pushed aside the enemy cavalry pickets from Wharton's division and drove them toward Liberty Gap. Once in the gap, however, the Federal forces began to meet stiff resistance. McCook ordered Johnson to seize the gap, but Johnson was unable to continue straight

ahead as Wilder had at Hoover's Gap. The good defensive posture of Liddell's regiments made it necessary for Johnson's brigades to deploy off the road, climb the hills and flank Liddell's positions. In what became the most severe fight of the campaign, Liddell eventually fell back to prepared defensive positions at the mouth of gap.²⁰

As the actions at Hoover's and Liberty Gaps unfolded, the other two Federal corps supported by cavalry continued Rosecrans' deception. Granger's corps advanced toward Christiana while Mitchell drove the rebels out of Middleton. He then returned to Christiana and linked up with Major General Stanley. This large cavalry force then bivouacked near Granger. Granger and Stanley ordered their forces to build a large number of fires for the evening, to further the impression of a large column moving south toward Shelbyville.²¹

Crittenden, north of Bradeyville, continued to slog his way through the mud. He encountered little resistance during his march and reached the outskirts of Bradeyville by evening. The going was extremely slow for Crittenden's men as they marched over one of the worst roads in the area. This road grew worse with each passing unit. Crittenden reported later that it often took as many as fifty men and eight mules, tugging and pulling, to move a wagon forward over the mired roads.²²

As Rosecrans evaluated his operations that night he had reason to be pleased. Both Liberty and Hoover's Gaps were in his possession. All units of the Army of the Cumberland had moved as planned and had reached their designated objectives. Still, Rosecrans had reason for concern. His rapid seizure of Hoover's Gap might seem more than a diversion to Bragg, which could unravel the entire deception.

The early capture of Hoover's Gap the first day of the campaign opened the way for the advancing columns of Thomas' and McCook's corps. It accelerated the great turning move envisioned by Rosecrans. While perhaps neither side realized it fully at the time, it would be the move that in a matter of days would unhinge Bragg's defense and render his prepared works untenable.

The early seizure of Hoover's Gap also had far reaching effects on the planned movements of Rosecrans' army. With the seizure of the gap early, Rosecrans had to adjust the movements of his army accordingly. It would still take time to concentrate the army at Manchester. The linkup in Manchester was delayed because Crittenden could not move quickly. To accomplish his deception plan, Rosecrans also continued feints on Shelbyville and Liberty Gap. Therefore, it became necessary to actually slow the movement on Thomas' axis in order to develop the picture and synchronize the movement of all forces.

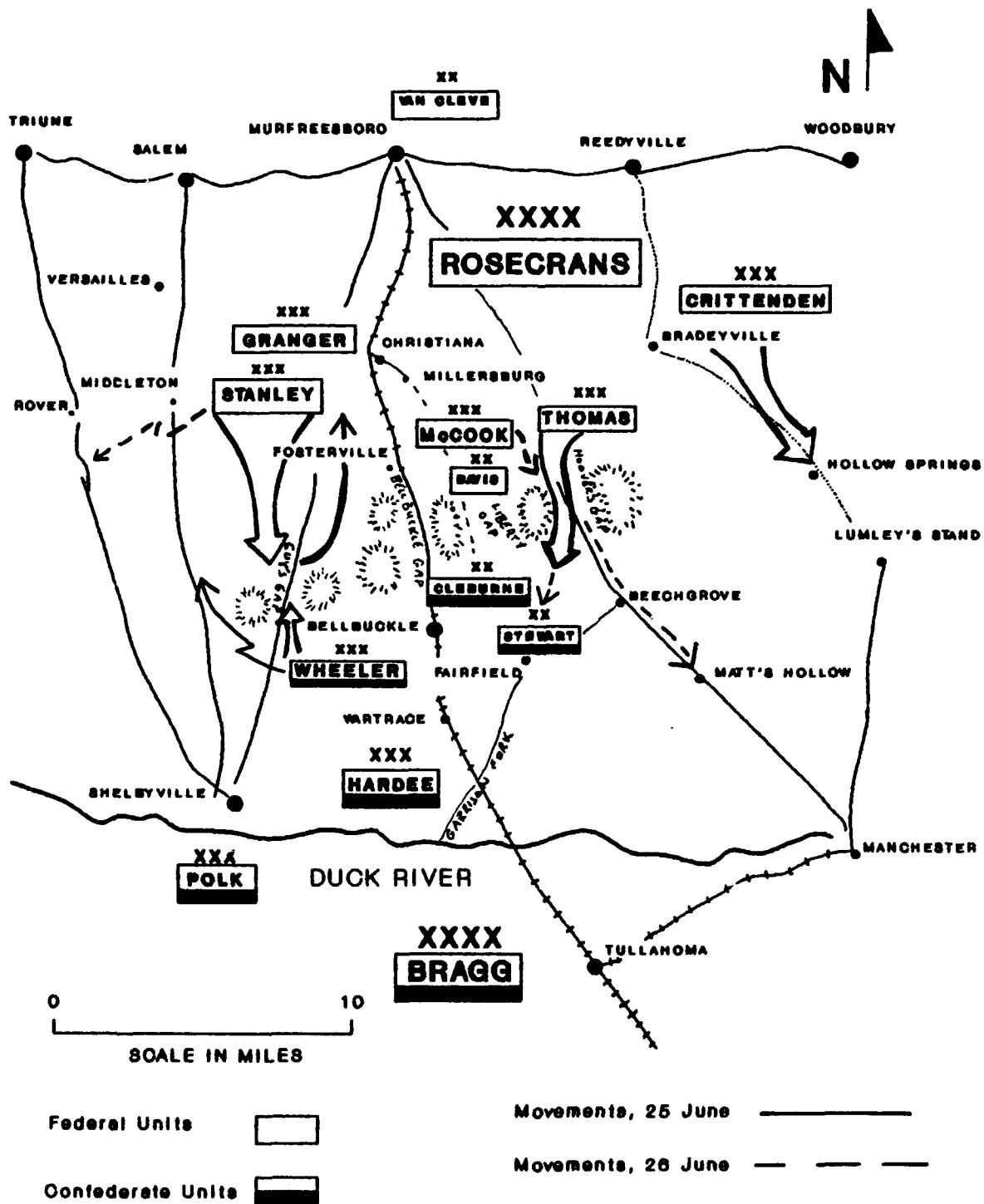
Rosecrans admitted in his report on the battle that it was not clear at the time how Bragg might interpret the Federal movements. Additionally, Rosecrans was not yet certain if the enemy would advance on McCook or attempt to flank Thomas. Clearly, Rosecrans maintained the idea of continuing the envelopment on the Union left flank. He definitely wanted Thomas to move further to the left if possible. Rosecrans requested Thomas to give an assessment of enemy activity to the front and offer an opinion for continued operations. Rosecrans similarly asked McCook and Granger to observe and report activity to their front.²³

Bragg did not seem to have yet determined this Federal plan. Throughout the 24th, confused reports filtered in to Bragg's headquarters. Wheeler and Polk believed the brunt of the Federal attack was aimed at Shelbyville. Hardee's reports on the fighting at Liberty Gap made this view seem plausible, however, Hardee also reported a major effort at Hoover's Gap. As a result of the latter report Bragg displayed some concern about his right flank and he ordered Wharton to shift two regiments of cavalry toward Manchester late in the day of the 24th. Bragg further ordered Polk to hold his command in readiness to move. However, other orders issued by Bragg on the 24th indicate he continued to believe the major attack would fall on Shelbyville. His orders to Hardee reflected Bragg's belief

that the Liberty Gap and Hoover's Gap actions were demonstrations.²⁴

Bragg's beliefs were likely the result of four factors. First, Bragg had little or no contact with the forces actually fighting the Federals. He relied primarily on telegraph and courier messages which were not delivered in a timely fashion. Second, the move by Wheeler across the front to Shelbyville on 22 - 23 June misled Bragg as to the point of the main attack. His trust in Wheeler, and Wheeler's rapid movement to the west caused Bragg to believe that Wheeler was responding to the greater threat. Third, Wheeler's cavalry reported strong Federal cavalry and infantry forces (Mitchell and Granger) in front of Shelbyville on 23 and 24 June. Fourth, as a result of Wheeler's move, Bragg had little in the way of reconnaissance in the east. Additionally, he had practically no contact with the forces at Hoover's Gap. Bragg, therefore, received no information from that quarter. The four factors were enough to convince Bragg that Rosecrans intended to attack Shelbyville.²⁵

Rosecrans, of course had no knowledge of what Bragg was thinking. This uncertainty led Rosecrans, ever mindful of his grand turning movement, to issue orders for 25 June that would hopefully outline the scene he wanted to paint (Map 6). Crittenden would advance to Lumley's Stand and open communications with Thomas. Thomas would attack the



Map 6. Movements on 25 and 26 June, 1863

rebels and drive them toward Fairfield. This would make it look like Thomas intended to head for Shelbyville. McCook would continue to threaten an advance in force through Liberty Gap. Stanley and Granger would continue to present the image of a large combined force attempting to drive south to Shelbyville. If the Confederates retreated toward Wartrace, Thomas was to send the bulk of his force directly south to Manchester. This move would pave the way for McCook to follow and join him. Crittenden, in turn, could also join Thomas and Crittenden. This maneuver would concentrate the Army of the Cumberland on Bragg's weak flank. Bragg, in the meantime would be responding to the deception and would continue to concentrate his forces on the wrong flank. Rosecrans believed the situation would compel Bragg to withdraw.²⁶

More drenching rain greeted both armies as daylight appeared on the 25th. The rain slowed many of the movements planned for the day, especially that of Crittenden. His road, poor even in good weather, was by now a morass. The muddy condition of the road greatly fatigued Crittenden's men and slowed his movement to a crawl. Only through dogged determination did the head of his command make it to Hollow Springs, a position 4 miles short of Lumley's Stand by nightfall.²⁷

Granger, on the opposite flank, was now in command of Stanley and Mitchell in addition to the infantry of the

Reserve Corps. Early in the day he directed a cavalry column to advance on Fosterville to counter Confederate attempts to drive in the Federal pickets on the Shelbyville road. In a sharp engagement that afternoon, two regiments from Colonel Robert H. Minty's cavalry brigade pushed the Confederate pickets into and then south of Fosterville. The Federal cavalry managed to drive the Confederate cavalry back onto the infantry forces occupying Guy's Gap. At that point the Confederates opened fire with artillery and forced Minty's cavalry to retrace their steps back to Christiana.²⁸

Thomas, too, made contact to his front. His fourth division under Reynolds made slow headway as a result of the driving rain and continued skirmishing with Bate and Johnson. By the day's end, Reynold's division secured the foot of the heights toward Fairfield but the enemy forced him to halt there. Brannan, who had been detached from Granger on the 24th, was unable to rejoin Thomas until late on the 25th. Thomas reported the delay to Rosecrans and offered observations about the situation. Thomas believed the enemy had a brigade on the Fairfield road and one on the Manchester Pike and that the enemy intended to delay or defend. Thomas then recommended that the XIV Corps prepare to attack the next morning. Thomas proposed to launch his main effort against Fairfield while one division moved on Manchester.²⁹

The movements of Hardee's corps on the 25th prompted Thomas' observations. Hardee ordered Stewart not to contest the approach to Manchester if pressed heavily. Hardee also stipulated that Stewart was to fall back gradually to Wartrace if pressed. In effect Stewart's orders meant that he was not to defend or delay on the axis toward Manchester. Stewart's subsequent compliance had grave consequences for Bragg's ability to stop the Federal advance.³⁰

But on the 25th at least, Thomas did not push Stewart's withdrawing brigades very hard. The slow concentration of the Federal corps gave the Confederates some respite. On the afternoon of the 25th Crittenden's lead elements were just beginning their difficult ascent to Lumley's Stand. In view of the weather conditions and the poor route he traveled, Crittenden could not get to Manchester as quickly as Thomas and McCook. Rosecrans likely understood this and probably conveyed his concern to Thomas. This seems the logical explanation for the numerically superior XIV Corps to halt instead of brushing Stewart aside.

McCook's corps, in Liberty Gap, however, faced heavier resistance. Shortly after daylight, Liddell's brigade launched a series of local attacks against McCook's forces in Liberty Gap while Cleburne moved Brigadier General S.A.M. Wood's brigade north in support.³¹ On Cleburne's arrival later in the morning, Cleburne observed that Liddell

still guarded the approaches coming from Bellbuckle and Liberty Gaps. Indeed, by 4 P.M. Liddell thought the Federals appeared to be retreating. On his own initiative, Liddell ordered an attack on Liberty Gap. Despite Liddell's spirited assault and additional reinforcement provided by Wood's brigade, Cleburne's division could not dislodge McCook's forces. To make matters worse McCook counterattacked toward Cleburne in the early evening, threatening to force Cleburne out of the gap. As a result of the heavy action Cleburne determined at least a Federal division held the gap and probably had more behind it. He therefore ordered his division to fall back to the more defensible terrain around Bellbuckle.³²

It is appropriate to point out here that Bragg's concern of the main attack falling on Shelbyville continued to influence the actions of Hardee and his division commanders. By the evening of the 24th and the morning of the 25th Bragg still had very little information from the Hoover's Gap area. He did know, however, that there were strong Federal forces operating on the Shelbyville Pike and in Liberty Gap. Realizing that Granger's forces were halted north of Guy's Gap and that there was still heavy activity in Liberty Gap, Bragg revised his opinion and decided the Federal main effort would come through Liberty Gap.³³

This may account for Hardee's apparent indifference to resisting the Federals along the Fairfield Road and

Manchester Pike. It also helps account for Hardee's orders to Stewart for a gradual delay back from Hoover's Gap. And, of course, it explains why Cleburne considered it important to prevent the Yankees from pushing through Liberty Gap.³⁴

On the third day of the campaign Rosecrans once again had reason to be pleased, although he remained a bit anxious. His forces still held Hoover's and Liberty Gaps. Thomas had pushed Stewart back. Both flanks of the Army of the Cumberland were accomplishing their tasks, although Crittenden's progress remained slow. Rosecrans' only concern was about Thomas' inability to push toward Manchester. As Rosecrans considered his plans for 26 June he decided that the orders for the 25th would stand with only a few exceptions.³⁵

Although Rosecrans agreed in part with Thomas' plan for an advance on Fairfield and Manchester, he directed Thomas to weight the Manchester approach, while continuing a supporting attack toward Wartrace. This would force Hardee's forces toward Wartrace, while allowing the main body of Thomas' corps to proceed toward Manchester.³⁶

Rosecrans also ordered McCook to prepare his corps to disengage and move east to follow Thomas through Hoover's Gap. McCook was to leave one division to hold Liberty Gap and keep up the impression of an attack striking from that direction.³⁷

THE DRIVE TO MANCHESTER

At 4 A.M. on 26 June, Reynold's division of Thomas' corps initiated the day's movements with an attack on Beech Grove on the road to Manchester. Shortly after this Thomas ordered Rousseau's and Brannan's divisions to drive the enemy toward Fairfield to secure Reynold's flank. Major General James S. Negley's division remained positioned between the two columns as a reserve prepared to support either. By early afternoon Wilder's brigade seized Matt's Hollow and opened the gate to Manchester. Brannan and Rousseau too were extremely successful. They rapidly drove the enemy back toward Fairfield, thereby relieving any pressure on Thomas' main column.³⁸

McCook on the right kept up the deception in Liberty Gap with Davis' division and one brigade from Johnson's division. He moved the rest of XX Corps to the east and prepared to advance south through Hoover's Gap. To cover his move McCook ordered Davis' division to conduct a demonstration against the defenders to the south to convey the idea of an attack toward Shelbyville. Davis' division soon made contact with a strong enemy force to its front and Davis halted. Throughout the day Davis kept up the impression of an advance by continued skirmishing with the enemy.³⁹

Crittenden, for his part, continued to proceed slowly past Hollow Springs while his men labored to bring

the wagons through the quagmire. On the Federal right flank, Stanley and Granger, maneuvering around Christiana, maintained the impression of a general advance on the road to Shelbyville. Granger also kept some of Stanley's cavalry busy searching to the west for Forrest's cavalry. By the end of the day all movements planned the 26th were complete and Rosecrans proposed to continue in much the same manner on the following day.⁴⁰

By late evening of 26 June Rosecrans had learned Hardee's corps was apparently withdrawing toward Shelbyville, Wartrace or possibly Tullahoma. Therefore, his orders to the Army of the Cumberland for the 27th reflected a continuance of the same general scheme of maneuver. Rosecrans would continue to maneuver so as to concentrate his army on the left flank in the vicinity of Manchester.⁴¹

Understanding the problems Crittenden encountered on his route, Rosecrans ordered him to move toward Manchester as fast as possible. Rosecrans then ordered Thomas to move his main column rapidly toward Manchester at daylight on 27 June. Thomas was to threaten Fairfield with the remainder of his forces to protect the main column and drive the enemy from that place. Rosecrans also told Thomas that once the enemy was driven from Fairfield the rest of XIV Corps should proceed to Manchester by the shortest route. These orders to Thomas reflected a concern that Bragg might be trying to

prevent a flanking maneuver by concentrating forces at Tullahoma for a possible attack or retreat.⁴²

Rosecrans' orders to McCook remained basically unchanged. Rosecrans did reflect his desire for McCook to close up quickly behind Thomas as the movement toward Manchester continued. On McCook's right, Granger received orders to advance in force no further than Guy's Gap. Stanley's cavalry received instructions to feel out the enemy. If Stanley received no significant contact he could feel free to advance on Shelbyville and demonstrate to its front. Following the demonstration Stanley was to move east to the Manchester Pike and rejoin the main column of the Army of the Cumberland.⁴³

Bragg did not know Rosecrans' exact dispositions on the afternoon of 26 June. Instead, Bragg now believed that the main Federal column was positioned in front of Liberty Gap ready to descend on Shelbyville. With this in mind Bragg called Polk to Army headquarters and resurrected the flank maneuver contemplated in the spring. Polk would attack north through Guy's Gap on the morning of the 27th and strike the Federals in their flank. Hardee would continue to hold his position to fix Rosecrans while Polk shattered the Federal right. A visibly upset Polk argued that the plan was unworkable, however, Bragg overruled Polk's protest. With Bragg's decision apparently

irreversible, Polk returned to Shelbyville to issue the necessary orders.⁴⁴

By 4:30 P.M. Bragg learned of Hardee's hard fight near Fairfield. Although Bragg did not know it before his discussion with Polk, Thomas had outflanked Stewart at 2 P.M.. Conscious of a possible shift in the Union effort, Bragg canceled the previous order to Polk. In the meantime Stewart's division continued to pull back toward Fairfield under heavy enemy pressure. At 5 P.M. Bragg finally received the news of Stewart's left being turned. By 6 P.M. Bragg received word that Thomas had threatened Stewart's right forcing Stewart to fall back. This meant the road to Manchester was now wide open and that Rosecrans might drive Stewart all the way to Wartrace. Finally, Bragg realized the danger of the situation. If Rosecrans continued to press Stewart to Wartrace, Cleburne's division would be cut off from the rest of Bragg's army. The Federals could also threaten to strand Polk on the north side of the Duck River. This situation would, in turn, prevent Polk from joining Bragg at Tullahoma should it become necessary.⁴⁵

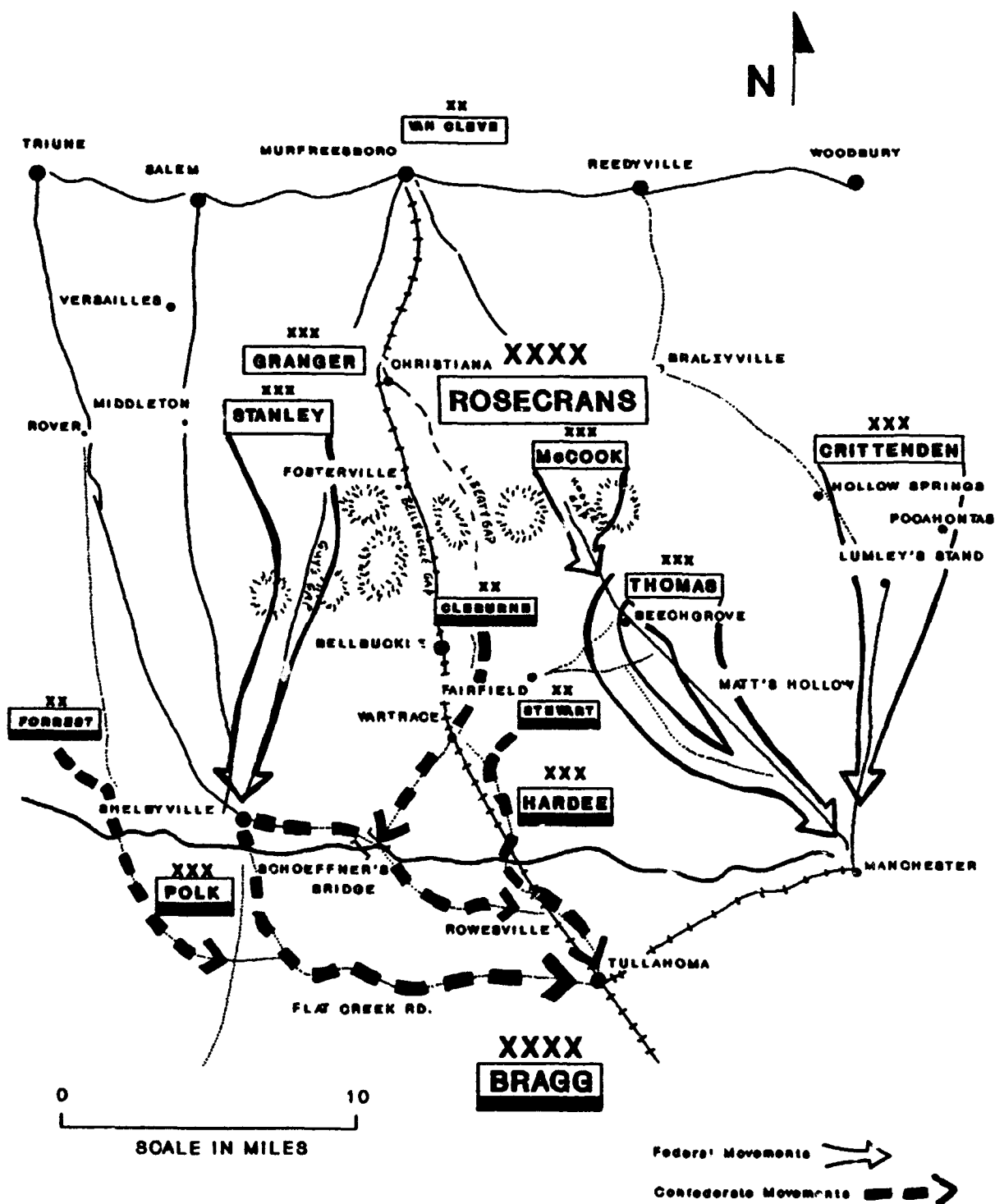
Bragg understood the danger to his army but apparently he still did not understand the objective of Rosecrans' maneuver. Bragg's concern for Wartrace reflected a concern about a shallow envelopment. Rosecrans, of course, envisioned a wider and deeper envelopment, which

aimed to turn Bragg's right and seize the Elk River bridges in Bragg's rear.⁴⁶

Bragg's unwillingness to attack Rosecrans' flank, and his failure to discern Rosecrans' true designs, ultimately forced him to retreat. At 5 P.M. on 26 June, Bragg requested Polk's advice on whether the army should stay and fight or retreat to Tullahoma. Although no evidence of a response exists, later developments soon made the question a moot point. By 6 P.M. on the 26th, Bragg learned that Stewart's division could not hold Fairfield against an enemy advance in force in the morning. This was a critical time for a decision, and, at 11 P.M., Bragg ordered Polk and Hardee to vacate their positions and fall back on Tullahoma in the morning.⁴⁷

The Federal army continued its successful movements on the morning of the 27th (Map 7). Wilder entered Manchester at 8 A.M., taking the town completely by surprise and capturing the small garrison. Reynolds, with the remainder of the division, entered Manchester at noon. In the meantime Brannan and Rousseau successfully drove Stewart's division from Fairfield. Negley began his movement south to Manchester at 11:30 in the morning. Shortly after 12 P.M. Brannan and Rousseau wheeled south and followed Negley toward Manchester.⁴⁸

Armed with reports from Thomas that things were going as planned, Rosecrans began to issue a series of



Map 7. Movements on 27 and 28 June, 1863.

orders to get the army to Manchester as rapidly as possible. He urged Thomas to close quickly so as to clear the way for McCook's corps. McCook, with his lead division at Beech Grove, split Sheridan's division and sent part of it directly to Manchester on the Manchester Pike. The remaining brigade moved south behind Rousseau. At 1 P.M. Rosecrans, apparently remembering the importance of securing his right flank and seeing a potential log jam on the Manchester Pike, revised the order. He now directed McCook to send all of Sheridan's division by way of Fairfield to Manchester. Additionally, Sheridan was to post a brigade at Fairfield to cover the passing of the other two brigades. Rosecrans then directed McCook to push his other two divisions to Manchester behind Thomas on the direct route of the Manchester Pike. Turning his eyes further to the rear Rosecrans also ordered Van Cleve to bring two of his brigades forward from Murfreesboro immediately.⁴⁹

Content with the success of his main effort, Rosecrans turned next to his left flank. He again ordered Crittenden to get to Manchester as quickly as possible. The instructions Rosecrans provided Crittenden reflected a lack of concern for any threat from the east to this exposed left flank. He told Crittenden to leave a brigade with the corps trains and proceed forward with the remaining forces. Crittenden, however, displayed some caution. He ordered

Turchin to proceed to Pocahontas to screen the left flank until the corps passed Lumley's Stand.⁵⁰

While Rosecrans directed these movements, Granger and Stanley were busy on the Federal right flank. At 9 A.M., in pursuance of his orders, Stanley moved out from Christiana. Supported by an infantry brigade from Baird's division Stanley headed south to dislodge the enemy from Guy's Gap. After a 2 hour skirmish at Fosterville, Stanley determined that only cavalry was present in Guy's Gap. Stanley informed Granger who then ordered Stanley to seize the gap. Stanley's composite force quickly carried the gap and continued in pursuit of the enemy cavalry as it fled south toward Shelbyville. Baird's infantry, ordered by Granger to remain in position, continued to hold the gap.⁵¹

Stanley's troopers chased the enemy cavalry south, following the Shelbyville Pike, to their fortifications three miles north of Shelbyville. At this point the enemy cavalry, led by Major General Wheeler, turned to fight. Wheeler directed artillery at Stanley's force, but the Union cavalry ignored it. Stanley directed Minty's brigade to charge the works. Minty wasted no time and his charge broke the back of the feeble Confederate defense. Wheeler's force, of Wheeler's and Brigadier General Will T. Martin's divisions, turned and retreated again.⁵²

Wheeler halted his forces at a line of works immediately north of Shelbyville at about 6 P.M. and

attempted to defend once again. Wheeler directed the fire of three well placed guns on Stanley as he approached. Stanley, not wanting to lose momentum, again ordered a charge, and within minutes his cavalry carried the position, causing Wheeler to flee from Shelbyville. Stanley's cavalry then pursued Wheeler's force to the Duck River as Wheeler tried to make good his escape. Only a sharp rearguard action by a regiment of Martin's cavalry prevented Wheeler's capture and allowed most of his force to escape.⁵³

In this action, Stanley made contact with elements of Wheeler's and Martin's cavalry divisions, but did not encounter Forrest. In fact it was not until midnight, after four days of action, that Stanley learned of Forrest's whereabouts. Although Forrest was in the vicinity of the cavalry fighting on the 27th he missed the action.

On the 25th, while still on picket duty near Spring Hill, Forrest received orders from Wheeler to move his division to Shelbyville. Late on the 26th Forrest, moving east at Bigbyville (20 miles east of Shelbyville), received orders to continue east to try to intercept Union cavalry known to be on the Shelbyville Pike. By the morning of the 27th Forrest was within ten miles of Guy's Gap. Hearing gunfire from that direction, Forrest pushed Brigadier General Frank Armstrong's brigade rapidly east to attempt a juncture with Wheeler's cavalry. But, by the time Armstrong neared the Pike, he saw Wheeler retreating toward

Shelbyville. Forrest elected to move parallel to Wheeler's line of retreat and effect a link up at Shelbyville. The speed of Wheeler's retreat and Stanley's pursuit prevented the desired union. The presence of Stanley's cavalry forced Forrest to turn and cross the Duck River four miles west of Shelbyville. After crossing the river Forrest avoided contact with the Federal cavalry and moved east to Tullahoma.⁵⁴

While Stanley's cavalry fought through the afternoon of the 27th, the left wing of Rosecrans' army continued to concentrate. Reynolds entered Manchester at noon and closed his trains prior to 6 P.M.. Rosecrans and Thomas themselves arrived shortly after Reynolds. Negley's division arrived at 8 P.M. followed by Brannan's division at 10 P.M.. Rousseau's arrival at midnight meant that most of Thomas' corps was gathered around Manchester. Throughout the night, Thomas' remaining trains and detachments left between Beech Grove and Manchester streamed in and by daylight on 28 June had closed on Manchester.⁵⁵

McCook did not get any of his divisions into Manchester until the 28th owing to the poor road conditions and delays for Thomas' corps to clear out of his path. Crittenden was also bogged down on his route. By nightfall on the 27th the head of his column was still four miles from Manchester and his tail stretched back to Lumley's Stand. While the distance between the front and rear of his column

was no more than 6 to 7 miles it took many of Crittenden's units, notably the trains, two more days to traverse the distance to Manchester.⁵⁶

As Rosecrans' army moved toward Manchester, Bragg took measures to concentrate the Army of Tennessee at Tullahoma. During the night of 26 June, and early on the next morning, the corps commanders issued orders to their division commanders to move to Tullahoma. Hardee's corps began its movement first. At first light Stewart started his movement south, paralleling the Wartrace - Tullahoma Road. Cleburne's division, at the same time, moved south toward Tullahoma via Wartrace - Schoeffner's Bridge - Tullahoma. As Hardee moved his corps south Wharton's cavalry division covered the rear of the column.⁵⁷

Polk's corps moved at 5:30 A.M. on the 27th and cleared Shelbyville by 8:00 A.M.. Wither's division moved to Tullahoma via the Flat Creek Road which ran parallel to the Elk River about six miles south of it. Cheatham's division moved directly east on the north side of the Elk River, then turned south to cross the Elk at Schoeffner's Bridge. At 1 P.M. the convergence of Cleburne's and Cheatham's columns created a bottleneck at the bridge. Only after Polk ordered Cleburne to pull off the road and allow Cheatham to pass did the movement resume. Once across the bridge, Cheatham, followed by Cleburne proceeded to Rowesville, then south on the Wartrace - Tullahoma road.⁵⁸

The Army of Tennessee moved slowly owing to the poor weather and the use of the same roads by several divisions. The roads were in such bad shape that the infantry of both corps did not reach Tullahoma until early in the morning of the 28th. The last elements of the army, the trains, and Wheeler's cavalry, closed more than 12 hours later.⁵⁹

The seemingly rapid movements of the enemy and the slow progress of his own army worried Bragg. Shortly after 8 A.M. on 27 June he learned Rosecrans had captured Manchester. Bragg also knew the enemy had scouts in the vicinity of Wartrace, shadowing Wharton's cavalry. As the day wore on Bragg received scattered reports detailing the traffic jam of his columns. Sometime before 11 P.M., Bragg received word that Martin's cavalry division had suffered a defeat at Shelbyville.⁶⁰

As his army struggled to reach Tullahoma the seriousness of the situation became even more apparent to Bragg. If the Federals continued to operate against Bragg's right they could cut off his railroad line of supply and his avenue of retreat. Bragg knew there were many alternatives open to Rosecrans to accomplish this. First, Rosecrans could move to cut the railroad bridge near Decherd. Second, Rosecrans could move via Hillsborough to University Place and then directly to Chattanooga. Third, Rosecrans could seize Cowan and thereby control the railroad and the main pike, toward Chattanooga. Additionally, this location

controlled access to the Cowan railroad tunnel. If blocked, the Chattanooga and Nashville Railroad would be unusable below Cowan. Lastly, Rosecrans could opt for a shallow envelopment and seize the crossing sites over the Elk River between Tullahoma and Decherd.⁶¹

Rosecrans' seizure of Manchester and Bragg's evacuation of the Spring Hill - Shelbyville - Wartrace - McMinnville line ended the first phase of Rosecrans' campaign. In spite of heavy rains and poor road conditions Rosecrans turned Bragg out of position as planned. Bragg had believed the Federal deception and remained confused until it was too late. On the other hand, Rosecrans had maneuvered his forces brilliantly. As both armies moved into their new positions, Rosecrans retained several good options but Bragg had only two choices: fight or retreat!

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 3

¹OR 23/1: Granger to Rosecrans, 15 July 1863, 535; OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 405.

²OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 405.

³OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 405.

⁴OR 23/1: Mitchell to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 543-4.

⁵Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 126.

⁶OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 405; Rosecrans states in his report that he ordered Palmer's division to advance on the 23rd concurrently with Granger's advance. However, Crittenden and Palmer state their orders were for the 24th of June., OR 23/1: Palmer to Oldershaw, 10 July 1863, 528; Careful scrutiny of Rosecrans' report bears this out. He mentions that Granger's and Mitchell's movements occurred as planned on the 23rd, however, says nothing about Crittenden's corps or Palmer's division until the 24th., OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 405-6.

⁷OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 405.

⁸OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 405; Granger to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 535; Mitchell to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 543; Crittenden to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 521.

⁹George S. Wilson, Wilder's Brigade of Mounted Infantry in the Tullahoma - Chickamauga Campaigns (Topeka: Kansas Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States [M.O.L.L.U.S.], 1891), 7; OR 23/1: Wilder to Reynolds, 11 July 1863, 457-8; John T. Wilder, "Hoover's Gap," The National Tribune, 20 September 1906, 2.

¹⁰Wilson, Wilder's Brigade, 7; Brigadier General William Bate of Stewart's division, did indeed command the infantry brigade responsible for manning the defenses within the narrow portion of Hoover's Gap. However, Stewart positioned most of his infantry south of Hoover's Gap at Garrison's Fork in the vicinity of Beech Grove. Bate's

brigade was stationed at this location not in the gap. To complicate matters, on the 24th of June, most of Bate's officers were away from their units attending a Masonic picnic., OR 23/1: Wilder to Reynolds, 11 July 1863, 451, 458; Wilder, "Hoover's Gap," 2; OR 23/1: Bate to Stewart, 15 July 1863, 611-12.

¹¹OR 23/1: Bate to Stewart, 15 July 1863, 611; B.R. Johnson to Stewart, 12 July 1863, 602.

¹²OR 23/1: Wilder to Reynolds, 11 July 1863, 458.

¹³Wilder, "Hoover's Gap," 2; OR 23/1: Bate to Stewart, 15 July 1863, 612-13; Henry Campbell, "Extract From the Journal of Henry Campbell, Eighteenth Indiana Battery: Regarding Battle of Hoover's Gap," 1907, 23, Special Collections, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

¹⁴OR 23/1: Wilder to Reynolds, 11 July 1863, 459; Wilder, "Hoover's Gap," 2.

¹⁵Wilder, "Hoover's Gap," 2; Korn and the editors of Time-Life Books, Fight for Chattanooga, 26.

¹⁶Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 119.

¹⁷Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 119, citing Hardee to Bragg, 12 January 1863; Hardee to Bragg, 26 January 1863; Hardee to Mackall, 28 April 1863; contained in the Hardee Papers, Alabama.

¹⁸St. John Richardson Liddell and Nathaniel C. Hughes, ed., Liddell's Record (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1985), 127; OR 23/1: Johnson to McCook, 6 July 1863, 483.

¹⁹Irving A. Buck, Patrick Cleburne and Thomas Robson Hay, ed., Cleburne and His Command (New York: Walter Neale Publishing Co., 1908; reprinted, Dayton, OH: Morningside Bookshop, 1985), 131; Horvell and Elizabeth Purdue, Pat Cleburne: Confederate General (Hillsboro, TX: Hill Junior College Press, 1973), 191; OR 23/1: Cleburne to Hardee, 3 August 1863, 586.

²⁰OR 23/1: McCook to Rosecrans, 10 July 1863, 465.

²¹OR 23/1: Granger to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 535; Mitchell to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 544.

²²OR 23/1: Crittenden to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 521; Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 408.

²³OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 406;
23/2: Garfield to Thomas, 24 June 1863, (10 P.M.), 451;
Garfield to McCook, 24 June 1863, 450.

²⁴Polk, Polk, 218-9; OR 23/2: Mackall to Polk, 24 June 1863, (6:15 P.M.), 883; Roy to Stewart, 24 June 1863, (4:30 P.M.), 884; Bragg's orders to move cavalry further to the east might not have been necessary had Wheeler remained on station as ordered. Prior to Rosecrans' advance Wheeler moved his division of cavalry into a position in front of Shelbyville. Wharton had only one cavalry brigade in position covering the front between Liberty and Hoover's Gaps. To the east of Wharton's division one solitary cavalry regiment guarded Hoover's Gap. To the east of this Wheeler left nothing. This explains Crittenden's failure to make contact with the enemy., OR 23/1: Bate to Hardee, 15 July 1863, 611-13; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 126.

²⁵Polk, Polk, II, 218-19; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 127.

²⁶OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 406.

²⁷OR 23/1: Palmer to Oldershaw, 10 July 1863, 528; An account by a soldier in Crittenden's corps describes best the terrible conditions the soldiers moved in. "Thursday, June 25. Still raining this morning, and the mud is getting pretty deep. The men seem loath to start but there is no alternative. Soon the different bands begin to pour forth their lively strains, thus instilling some enthusiasm into the men. Altogether it is a most imposing sight. Soon the men and artillery are upon the road, next the teams [of wagons], many of which are heavily loaded. Go about four miles, when we come to the town of Bradeyville, a perfect mudhole--not over a dozen houses and only two of them inhabited by white people. One mile farther, and the division halts about three hours for Palmer's division to get out of the road, which is almost impassible, everything like a [turn]pike ending here. Our road [leads] through a mountain pass or gap. [we] go about a mile and halt again--this time right in a wheat field. This [farmer] will be saved the trouble of cultivating this field. . . .This has been another day of rain and mud; and although we have made only six or seven miles, all hands are willing to turn in for the night.", John Wesley Marshall, from the John Wesley Marshall Diary, (97 Ohio Regiment, Wood's division), Fort Leavenworth, KS: Staff Ride Committee, Combat Studies Institute.

²⁸OR 23/1: Stanley to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 538-9; Minty to Stanley, 8 July 1863, 556.

²⁹OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 406; Francis F. McKinney, Education in Violence: The Life of George H. Thomas and the History of the Army of the Cumberland (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961), 212; Lamers, Edge of Glory, 280-81; OR 23/2: Thomas to Rosecrans, 25 June 1863, 458.

³⁰OR 23/2: Roy (Hardee's AAG) to Stewart, 24 June 1863, (10 P.M.), 884.

³¹OR 23/1: McCook to Rosecrans, 10 July 1863, 465-66; Cleburne to Hardee, 3 August 1863, 587.

³²OR 23/1: Liddell to Cleburne, 1 August 1863, 589-91; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 127-28; OR 23/1: McCook to Rosecrans, 10 July 1863, 465.

³³Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 127-28; OR 23/1: Cleburne to Hardee, 3 August 1863, 587.

³⁴OR 23/2: Roy to Stewart, 24 June 1863, (4:30 P.M., 5:30 P.M., and 10:30 P.M.), 884; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 127.

³⁵OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 406.

³⁶OR 23/2: Rosecrans to Thomas, 25 June 1863, 458.

³⁷OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 406.

³⁸OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 431; Rousseau to Thomas, 6 July 1863, 435; Brannan to Thomas, 28 June 1863, 451.

³⁹OR 23/1: McCook to Rosecrans, 10 July 1863, 466; Davis to McCook, 9 July 1863, 469.

⁴⁰OR 23/1: Palmer to Crittenden, 10 July 1863, 529; 23/2: Granger to Rosecrans, 26 June 1863, 461.

⁴¹OR 23/2: Goddard to Granger, 26 June 1863, 461; Granger to Rosecrans, 26 June 1863, 461.

⁴²OR 23/2: Rosecrans to Thomas, 26 June 1863, (10:35 P.M.), 467; Rosecrans to Crittenden, 26 June 1863, 460.

⁴³OR 23/2: Rosecrans to McCook, 26 June 1863, 464; Garfield to Stanley, 26 June 1863, 465.

⁴⁴Buck, Cleburne's Command, 130-31; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 128; OR 23/2: Mackall to Polk, 26 June 1863, 886.

⁴⁵OR 23/1: Mackall to Polk, 26 June 1863, 618;
Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 128.

⁴⁶OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 404.

⁴⁷Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 128-29; G. J. Fiebeger,
Campaigns of the American Civil War (West Point, N.Y.:
Military Academy Printing Office, 1910), 233.

⁴⁸OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 431;
Negley to Thomas, 8 July 1863, 443; Brannan to Thomas, 28
June 1863, 452.

⁴⁹OR 23/2: Garfield to McCook, 27 June 1863 (12:30
P.M.), 471; Garfield to McCook, 27 June 1863 (1:00 P.M.),
471; Bond to McCook, 27 June 1863, 470-71.

⁵⁰OR 23/2: Garfield to Crittenden, 27 June 1863 (10:15
A.M.), 470; 23/1: Turchin to Stanley, 10 July 1863, 553;
23/2: Garfield to Van Cleve, 27 June 1863, 475.

⁵¹OR 32/1: Stanley to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 539-40;
Granger to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 536-37; Mitchell to
Stanley, 8 July 1863, 544-45.

⁵²OR 32/1: Stanley to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 539-40;
Granger to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 536-37; Mitchell to
Stanley, 8 July 1863, 544-45.

⁵³OR 32/1: Stanley to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 539-40;
Granger to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 536-37; Mitchell to
Stanley, 8 July 1863, 544-45.

⁵⁴Jordan and Pryor, Campaigns of Forrest, 290-91.

⁵⁵OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 431.

⁵⁶OR 23/1: McCook to Rosecrans, 10 July 1863, 467;
Palmer to Crittenden, 10 July 1863, 529; Wood to Crittenden,
7 July 1863, 524.

⁵⁷OR 23/2: Hardee to Stewart, 26 June 1863 (8:30
P.M.), 886; Hardee to Stewart, 27 June 1863 (4 A.M.), 888;
23/1: Liddell to Hardee, 1 August 1863, 591.

⁵⁸OR 23/1: Notes of Lieutenant W.B. Richmond,
Lieutenant General Polk's aide-de-camp, 26 June - 7 July
1863, 619.

⁵⁹Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 129.

⁶⁰OR 23/1: Bragg to Cooper, 27 June 1863, 583; 23/2: Wharton to Wheeler, 27 June 1863, 889; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 129.

⁶¹Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 129.

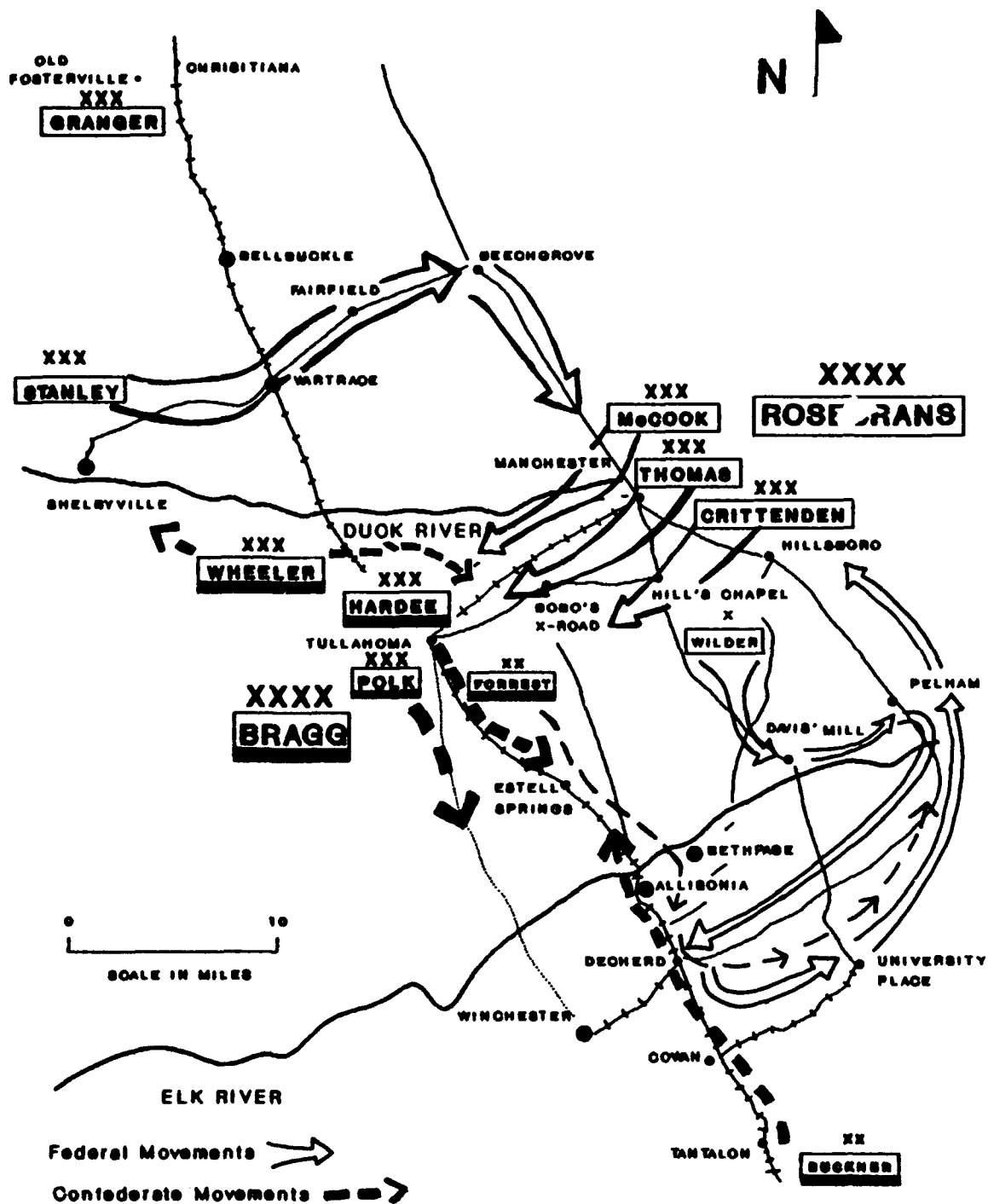
CHAPTER 4

THE CAMPAIGN ENDS

ROSECRANS CONTINUES TO CONCENTRATE

Bragg's fears that Rosecrans would attempt to cut the Army of Tennessee's line of communication were well-founded. As the Army of the Cumberland slowly closed on Manchester during 27 and 28 June, Rosecrans decided to cut the railroad in Bragg's rear. This move marked the beginning of the second phase of the Tullahoma campaign. By threatening Bragg's line of communications, Rosecrans believed he would once more force Bragg out of position, and hopefully cause Bragg to retreat at a disadvantage.¹

Accordingly, Rosecrans dispatched orders directly to Thomas and Reynolds, directing Colonel Wilder south to burn the Elk River Bridge near Allisonia and render the railroad useless between Decherd and C. wan. Rosecrans also directed Negley to send Brigadier General John Beatty's infantry brigade to Hillsboro to cover the left flank of the army and to support Wilder's brigade. Wilder started forward promptly at 4:30 A.M. on the morning of the 28th (Map 8). Beatty followed at 7:30 A.M. and occupied Hillsboro prior to noon.²



Map 8. Movements on 28 June through Midnight 30 June 1863

These orders reflected Rosecrans' adherence to this concept of threatening Bragg's line of communications. Rosecrans felt that such a maneuver in Bragg's rear would cause Bragg great concern for his line of communications and force Bragg to reorient his attention. Wilder's actions would disrupt the railroad, while Beatty's move would keep a path open for the Federals to use for a continued envelopment of Bragg's flank. This dilemma should cause Bragg to vacate Tullahoma, thereby rendering his army incapable of an orderly retreat, and possibly vulnerable to attack.

While Wilder's and Beatty's forces moved south, the Army of the Cumberland continued to concentrate at Manchester. At 2:30 P.M. Rosecrans ordered Thomas to send two divisions toward Tullahoma. Rosecrans further directed that these divisions move to a position 5 to 6 miles from Tullahoma and thereby threaten Bragg's position. From this position Thomas would throw out scouting parties to the left and right. Rosecrans wanted Bragg's trains harassed and the railroad cut if possible.³

Having started his maneuver to force Bragg out of Tullahoma, Rosecrans turned his eyes toward his other corps commanders. Crittenden received additional orders to hasten his march to Manchester. Rosecrans also ordered Van Cleve to rejoin Crittenden at Manchester as soon as Granger's command relieved his forces at Murfreesboro. McCook was to

continue to close his corps on Manchester and prepare for further operations. Rosecrans ordered Granger to send a brigade from Nashville to Manchester and entrench in his present locations as necessary to fend off any rebel attack. Lastly, Rosecrans directed Granger to send Stanley's cavalry to the vicinity of Manchester if circumstances permitted.⁴

These instructions indicate a bit of uncertainty on the part of Rosecrans. As late as the afternoon of 28 June Rosecrans was unsure whether the enemy cavalry was in retreat to Tullahoma or still on its screen line toward Columbia. His instructions granting Granger the option to retain the cavalry reflect this. Furthermore, Rosecrans told Granger to attack any enemy cavalry that he found on the Federal right flank. If, however, the conditions allowed, Rosecrans wanted Granger to send Stanley to Manchester at once. Rosecrans' willingness to allow Granger to make the decision underscores the concern about where the enemy's cavalry was.⁵

As the day progressed significant events occurred on the Federal left flank in the vicinity of Davis' Mill. Wilder, on reaching the Elk River, found it so swollen that his brigade could not ford or swim across. Wilder then directed the main body of his brigade to move east to cross near Pelham. He also ordered the 123rd Illinois, under the command of Colonel James Monroe, to continue west and

destroy the Allisonia bridges. Following destruction of the bridges Monroe would join the brigade at Decherd.⁶

Colonel Monroe was the first of Wilder's command to reach his objective. As he neared the railroad bridge at Estell Springs (one of two Allisonia bridges) Monroe discovered a Confederate infantry division guarding it. Monroe soon came under attack by Confederate cavalry. Outnumbered and unable to accomplish his mission, Colonel Monroe fell back to Hillsboro.⁷

Wilder, with the main body, had somewhat better luck. On approaching Pelham, he learned there was a small detachment of Confederates at the bridge, who were attempting to destroy the only bridge across the Elk in that vicinity. Wilder immediately ordered a regiment forward to seize the bridge and prevent its destruction. Following the seizure of the bridge, Wilder left a small detachment to guard the bridge and continued on toward Decherd with the rest of his command. Difficult terrain and a number of swollen streams slowed Wilder's advance. Not until 8 P.M. did the brigade reach Decherd.⁸

At Decherd, Wilder ordered the brigade to attack the eighty man garrison and seize the town. After a sharp fight Wilder's men dislodged and scattered the defenders. Wilder's men then began to tear up the railroad track and water tanks. His men burned supplies at the depot and

wrecked the telegraph. Additionally, they destroyed the trestle works on the Winchester branch of the railroad.⁹

After destroying 300 yards of track, the destructive spree was cut short. The enemy troops that Wilder's men captured stated that a strong Confederate infantry force of six regiments was enroute to Decherd to retake the depot. Believing that he could not hold against such a force at night, Wilder ordered a withdrawal toward Pelham. After moving nearly eight miles to the east, Wilder ordered the brigade off the road and went into bivouac until daylight.¹⁰

While Wilder escaped, and the Federal army continued to concentrate in Manchester, Rosecrans continued to evaluate the situation. Despite his success, he believed more forces might be necessary to effect a flanking maneuver around Tullahoma. Additional forces were also necessary to secure his growing lines of communication. Rosecrans also needed a clear picture of what the enemy was doing on his right flank. Accordingly, Rosecrans directed Granger to send Brigadier General James D. Morgan's division and Brigadier General William T. Ward's brigade of R.S. Granger's division from Nashville to Murfreesboro. This made it unnecessary for Granger to send his infantry back to secure Murfreesboro. Once at Murfreesboro, Morgan and Ward would assist the safeguarding of the railroad and assist the engineers in the repair of the line. Additionally,

Rosecrans directed Granger to provide detailed intelligence on activity to his front.¹¹

With his orders in hand, Granger provided security and assistance to Rosecrans' engineers who, at the time, were repairing the railroad line near Wattrace. Granger's efforts to regain the railroad and keep the telegraph in operation were imperative to the success of the operation. The weather had made resupply extremely difficult, thereby making the railroad the only means of transport. Rosecrans' orders to Granger were indicative of his concern for resupply as he advanced further south. Granger then posted Baird's division at Shelbyville to oversee efforts to put the telegraph through and to gain intelligence on the situation on the Federal right flank. Lastly, Granger assured Rosecrans that he would return Van Cleve to Crittenden at the earliest possible moment.¹²

Granger's greatest contribution to Rosecrans in the ensuing hours was the intelligence he provided. Reports from Stanley's cavalry indicated that Bragg's army, to include his cavalry, was falling back toward Tullahoma. Granger believed the Rebels had vacated their Duck River line. Additionally, Granger was sure that Wheeler and Forrest were in retreat toward Bragg's army at Tullahoma.¹³

This absence of enemy on the Shelbyville front enabled Stanley to move east and join with the left wing of the army by 29 June. Granger was also able to begin

pushing through the railroad and telegraph between Murfreesboro and Rosecrans. Thus events on the Federal right freed up all but Granger's reserve forces for use on the left flank.¹⁴

Subsequent events on the morning of 29 June verified what Rosecrans already suspected. At 9:25 A.M. Brannan reported information from a local civilian placing Bragg, Lucius Polk and Cheatham at Tullahoma. The civilian also reported extensive works around Tullahoma. Additionally, the civilian stated that more of Bragg's army was at that moment entering Tullahoma. Brannan's information indicated further that Bragg intended to fight from Tullahoma. Lastly, Brannan received information that confirmed some of Bragg's forces were on detached service to Vicksburg.¹⁵

Rosecrans also learned from Reynolds, through Thomas, of the progress of Wilder's raid. Rosecrans now knew that Wilder's men held the bridge at Pelham; that a Confederate division guarded the bridges at Allisoria; and that Wilder's men had not destroyed either the road or railroad bridges. Rosecrans also received reports from the 123rd Illinois of Wilder's command confirming that Bragg intended to defend at Tullahoma. Specifically, local civilians told the 123rd Illinois that Bragg had no significant forces south of the Elk River and that his army was in heavy concentration at Tullahoma.¹⁶

Brannan's and Reynold's information provided enough detail for Rosecrans to develop a good picture of what was happening. By integrating Granger's reports, Rosecrans was able to determine that all of Bragg's army was either enroute to, or in Tullahoma. Brannan's mention of Lucius Polk and Cheatham in Tullahoma is critical. Each of these commanders were from different corps. It was a good bet that both Hardee and Leonidas Polk were also in the town.

Late the morning of 29 June, to further his knowledge of the Confederate dispositions and keep pressure on Bragg, Rosecrans ordered Thomas to advance toward Tullahoma and occupy Bobo's cross roads. Sheridan, commanding the only division of McCook's corps ready to advance, was to fall in on Thomas' right at Crumpton's Creek and close up on Brannan's division.¹⁷

By mid-day Thomas' divisions were in position, with Brannan, Reynolds and Negley occupying the right, center and left respectively. Rousseau's division assumed the reserve position behind the three lead divisions. Thomas' corps, and Sheridan on his right, threw strong pickets out to probe along all the east-west roads running into Tullahoma. Rosecrans, however, did not order an immediate advance. Rather, he continued to push McCook's and Crittenden's corps to assemble in the vicinity of Manchester. Rosecrans felt it prudent to wait for word of Wilder's further accomplishments before doing much else.¹⁸

Rosecrans, however, did not receive any supplemental reports of Wilder's actions. Unknown to Rosecrans, Wilder was at that time operating in the Cumberland Mountains in the vicinity of University Place. At daylight, Wilder confirmed that the enemy had strong cavalry and infantry detachments near Decherd and that any further attempts to destroy the railroad at that point would likely fail.¹⁹

Wilder, not yet satisfied to return to Thomas moved to University Place at 8 A.M. and destroyed a section of railroad running to Tracy City. He also directed Colonel John J. Funkhouser of the 98th Illinois to move south to destroy the railroad at Tantalón. Wilder then moved out toward Anderson (eight miles south of Tantalón) to do likewise.²⁰

Unfortunately, these attempts failed. Wilder's scouts reported that two trains laden with troops were at Anderson. At the same time Wilder learned of three troop trains near Tantalón. Wilder did not realize it at the time, but these trains contained Buckner's troops then enroute to reinforce Bragg, who had on 23 June requested reinforcements from Buckner. To make matters worse, at about 6 P.M. Wilder learned that his pickets at University Place were under attack by cavalry, supported by infantry moving up in yet another train. The cavalry was from Forrest's division which had earlier been ordered south by Wheeler to intercept Wilder. At this point Wilder decided

he could do nothing but withdraw. With Forrest's cavalry division in pursuit Wilder headed north for Manchester via Pelham.²¹

Wilder's raid did, however, contribute to the accomplishment of one of Rosecrans' key tasks. Halleck's guidance to Rosecrans oriented specifically at driving Bragg's army out of Middle Tennessee. Rosecrans' concept for the campaign reflected this idea first and foremost. Wilder's raid was the extension of this logic because it caused Bragg concern over his line of communication. Rosecrans believed that if Bragg became concerned enough about the vulnerability of his line of communication he would withdraw from Tullahoma. Events later proved the soundness of this logic.

Unable to await word from Wilder any longer, Rosecrans issued his orders just prior to midnight on 29 June. Rosecrans' wanted to portray to Bragg that the Army of the Cumberland would attack Tullahoma from the east. It would be another ruse! Thomas was to position the rest of his corps along his present line. McCook and Crittenden were to deploy their corps on the right and left of Thomas respectively. Crittenden would deploy in a manner that refused the Federal left flank and provided an opportunity to move rapidly south. While not explained to the corps commanders at the time, Rosecrans envisioned Crittenden and Thomas' corps eventually turning south to cut Bragg's line

of retreat and thereby force Bragg to withdraw. Additionally, all corps commanders received instructions to conduct heavy reconnaissance to support the impression of a pending attack.²²

Rosecrans next addressed his cavalry. Stanley's cavalry corps had moved through Shelbyville during the 29th and found it empty. Stanley then continued east toward Beech Grove, and by evening was in camp at Fairfield. Rosecrans sent word for him to join the army at Manchester on the 30th. Once Stanley arrived he was to prepare to conduct operations south to complete the destruction of the Elk River bridges and prevent Bragg's withdrawal using the railroad. Turchin and his one brigade of cavalry would continue to screen on the left flank of the army until Stanley's column arrived.²³

BRAGG CONSIDERS THE SITUATION

Bragg, for his part, remained confused by the Federal movements on the 28th and 29th. With virtually no cavalry yet protecting his line of communication, Bragg could not prevent Wilder's Decherd raid on the 28th. Combined with news of this action, Bragg learned of a large Federal force deploying on the approaches from Manchester to Tullahoma. Still, Bragg was unsure about Rosecrans' main body. In a series of orders dispatched to Wheeler, Bragg repeated a theme that characterized his uncertainty. He directed Wheeler to gather positive information on the enemy

to the left and, at the same time, determine where the Federal left was [which was largely, an empty flank].²⁴

As was his custom, Bragg decided to confer with his corps commanders. After ordering Polk to move his forces into position on the east side of Tullahoma, Bragg called Polk to army headquarters at 9 A.M. on 29 June. Bragg informed Polk that the enemy's cavalry (Wilder) had cut the army's line of communication at Decherd and that Wheeler's cavalry had failed to prevent it. Bragg then stated his view that it would be best to stand and fight at Tullahoma. Polk, however, disagreed and argued that if Bragg remained to fight at Tullahoma with the lines of communication cut, the army ran the risk of being surrounded and cut off from their base. Polk's protests, however, did not sway Bragg and his decision to defend at Tullahoma stood.²⁵

After leaving Bragg, Polk rode out to find Hardee and inform him of Bragg's decision. Polk suggested that they meet with Bragg and attempt to change his mind. At 3 P.M., when both men visited Bragg at army headquarters, the disagreement continued. Bragg argued that Wheeler's cavalry was sufficient to secure the lines of communication to Chattanooga, Polk countered with his belief that Wheeler's cavalry force was not large or strong enough to prevent the Federals from seizing the line of communication. Polk felt Bragg's plan risked falling into the same position Pemberton then faced at Vicksburg. Furthermore, Polk

argued, Rosecrans would not feel compelled to attack Bragg's Tullahoma works. Rather, Rosecrans would satisfy himself by surrounding Bragg and starving the Army of Tennessee. At the very least, Polk feared Rosecrans could force the army to retreat on a disadvantageous line.²⁶

As Polk argued, fresh news added to the confusion. Bragg's small force at Decherd telegraphed that the railroad had not been badly damaged and would be usable by nightfall. Hardee, at this point, stated that he was not ready to retreat. He wanted to wait and see what happened. Like Bragg, he believed the army could hold Tullahoma while the cavalry, backed by some infantry, could secure the lines of communication. Polk, however, maintained adamantly that Bragg should order a retreat at least as far as the south bank of the Elk River. After hearing the arguments, Bragg accepted Hardee's support and reiterated again his decision to defend Tullahoma.²⁷

TULLAHOMA EVACUATED

Heavy rain greeted both armies on the morning of the 30th, but the movements ordered by Rosecrans commenced after first light. Each of the three Federal corps moved slowly forward to portray an attack in force. The 30th proved to be a busy day for the Army of the Cumberland. As the army moved forward, Thomas was the first to report useful intelligence. During the night soldiers of Steedman's brigade of Brannan's division had killed a Rebel bearing an

important message from Wheeler to Forrest. The message indicated Forrest was operating between Manchester and Tullahoma. Subsequent skirmishes with the enemy by pickets from Brannan's and Reynold's divisions confirmed the presence of infantry and cavalry forces between the advancing Federal columns and Tullahoma. Sheridan's pickets on the right of Brannan encountered stiff resistance as well.²⁸

The cavalry was indeed that of Forrest as well as elements of Wheeler's corps. In fact, by this date Wheeler had virtually all of his cavalry in the vicinity of Tullahoma screening to the north and east. The infantry the Federal columns encountered was primarily that of Bragg's General Bushrod Johnson's brigade of Stewart's division. Behind Johnson's brigade lay the remainder of Hardee's corps which occupied the eastern side of the Tullahoma works.²⁹

Later in the day Rosecrans received further reports from his commanders reflecting their progress and beliefs about what Bragg might do. Granger reported that he had forces guarding Shelbyville and Guy's Gap and informed Rosecrans that given the lack of contact on the Federal right, Bragg did not intend to defend at Tullahoma. Thomas reported Wilder's return and confirmed the destruction of a section of track at Decherd and the capture of the bridge at Pelham.³⁰

By the day's end Reynolds' and Brannan's lead regiments were within two miles of Tullahoma, where they halted in the face of stiffening enemy resistance, and fearful of a possible trap. Of particular significance was the progress on the left of Thomas' corps by Negley's division. Negley's pickets, unlike those of the other divisions of Thomas' and McCook's corps, met no resistance that day. As Negley's lead regiments moved forward toward Estell Springs they discovered the road from Manchester to Estell Springs was devoid of any enemy.³¹

Negley's report was not the only good news Rosecrans received. Early on the morning of the 30th Rosecrans directed his Chief Engineer, Brigadier General J. St. Clair Morton, to determine the practicability of moving the main columns of the army from their present locations directly south to gain the critical crossing near Allisonia. Morton reported later in the day that such a move was possible because the ground to the south was much more favorable for maneuver than was the ground to the west of the army's current positions.³²

Recall that Rosecrans' concept called for two actions during this phase. First, Rosecrans designed his maneuver to fix Bragg in his defensive works at Tullahoma. Second, once fixed, Rosecrans would maneuver Thomas' and Crittenden's corps south to cut the railroad [Negley's movements on the left of Thomas' corps already oriented

south and were the preliminary movements of the envelopment]. Meanwhile, Stanley would seize the bridges over the Elk River. This combined maneuver would hopefully compel Bragg to retreat on a disadvantageous line. Negley's discovery of no enemy and Morton's report presented Rosecrans with the opportunity to accomplish much more than a mere turning of Bragg's position. With skillful and timely maneuver Rosecrans now had the chance to cut Bragg's avenue of retreat.

Interestingly, another possible option existed. Should Bragg not attempt to retreat from Tullahoma, Rosecrans could easily encircle Bragg's army by getting in behind him. It was this action that Polk feared earlier. If Rosecrans encircled Bragg, the war would likely end in Tullahoma for the Army of Tennessee, since an encircled, starving army, would have little choice but surrender.

Whether Rosecrans considered a siege is not clear. It is apparent, however, that Rosecrans formulated the orders for his next series of movements with an eye toward getting in behind Bragg. Rosecrans still felt Bragg would defend. Wilder's reports of reinforcements, the resistance of the enemy to Thomas' front and Brannan's concern that the enemy was trying to lure his regiments into a trap were indications of Bragg's commitment to defense. Rosecrans had no doubt of Bragg's intent.³³

Rosecrans, therefore, had no reason to believe that Bragg was attempting to flee. This contributed to Rosecrans' conviction that he would have to fix Bragg's front while maneuvering forces to the rear of Tullahoma. Such a maneuver might hopefully force Bragg out from behind his earthworks. Satisfied that this maneuver would achieve the desired effect, Rosecrans issued his corps commanders their orders at 3:30 A.M. on the 1st of July.³⁴

Rosecrans envisioned a continuation of a fixing movement with part of his army at the same time the movement of the main body southwest would interpose forces between Bragg and the Elk River. The previous day's alignment would remain basically intact, however, Crittenden's corps and Negley's division would orient directly southwest and prepare to move in that direction. When ordered, Thomas would move the rest of his corps behind Negley while McCook continued to fix Bragg. To give the intended envelopment greater depth Stanley would occupy Hillsboro and ready his command for movement across the Elk River toward the railroad. These orders did indeed show promise of being able to not only turn Bragg, but force him to fight at a disadvantage, however, the latter was not Rosecrans' goal. He remained hopeful of forcing Bragg to withdraw and it is for this reason that Stanley and Crittenden were not immediately dispatched across the Elk River.³⁵

On the morning of 30 June, Bragg reached his own conclusions about what Rosecrans was doing. He received reports from Hardee of a strong Federal force moving west toward Tullahoma along the major roads from Manchester and Hillsboro. This information, combined with Bragg's knowledge of the Federal cavalry raids (Wilder) on 29 June near University, darkened the outlook of a successful defense at Tullahoma. To make matters worse, Bragg began to receive reports of a strong Federal force within three miles of the bridges at Bethpage and Estell Springs. No doubt these were the soldiers of Negley's division conducting their reconnaissance in force.³⁶

Along with the Federal movements, weather played an important part in Bragg's reevaluation of his defense at Tullahoma. By 30 June the rain was in its seventh day and rivers and creeks overflowed their banks. Virtually every road was a sea of mud. If the Federals somehow managed to capture or destroy the bridges across the Elk, Bragg would be without an escape route.³⁷ In this situation, Bragg risked being surrounded and besieged as Polk feared. On the other hand, if Bragg crossed the river and destroyed the bridges he stood to prevent Rosecrans from moving any further south.

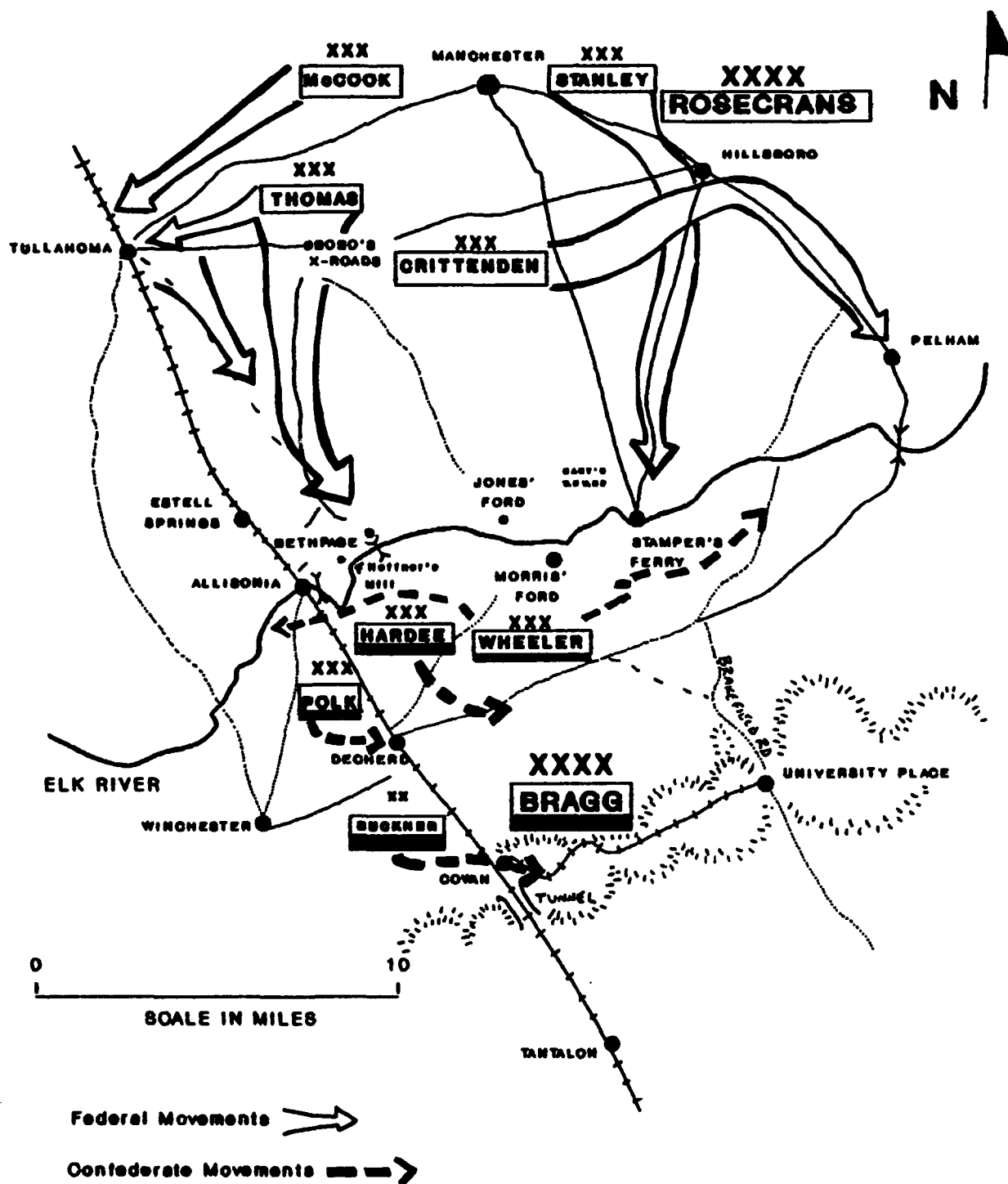
On the afternoon of 30 June Bragg, despite the arrival of Buckner that morning, decided that he could not hold Tullahoma. At 3 P.M. he issued orders to Polk and

Hardee to prepare for immediate movement (Map 9). In order to expeditiously move the army, Polk and Hardee would use different routes and separate crossings over the Elk River. Bragg directed Hardee to retreat south and cross the Elk River at the Bethpage bridge. He then ordered Polk to move to the west of Hardee, and cross at the Allisonia bridge. Wheeler and Cleburne's divisions were to cover the retreat of the army.³⁸

Movements commenced at 5 P.M. with the corps' trains moving south toward Allisonia. The main bodies of both army corps began to move at 11 P.M.. Although the distance that Polk's and Hardee's men had to travel was only eight miles, the roads slowed the movement greatly. It was not until 12 noon on 1 July that both corps had the preponderance of their infantry across the Elk River.³⁹

ROSECRANS SEIZES TULLAHOMA

On the morning of 1 July it became apparent to the Federals that Bragg was in retreat from Tullahoma. Thomas learned shortly after 8:30 A.M. that Brigadier General James B. Steedman's brigade had observed a great deal of activity in Tullahoma during the night. Steedman reported that all through the night his pickets heard the running of trains, which arrived and departed every hour. Judging from the accompanying beating of drums, Steedman believed it meant the departure or arrival of troops. The disappearance of enemy pickets to Steedman's right and the increasing



Map 9. Movements on 1 July through 8 A.M. 2 July 1863.

distance between the pickets to Steedman's front and the enemy indicated that an evacuation was in progress.⁴⁰

Using his initiative, Thomas ordered Brannan to send Steedman forward to reconnoiter as close to Tullahoma as the situation allowed. Reynold's division would support to his left. Thomas also ordered his corps to remain in readiness to move at a moment's notice. He warned Negley that if the rumor of Bragg's departure from Tullahoma was true, he could expect orders to move in pursuit.⁴¹

At 9:45 A.M. Thomas learned from a civilian that Bragg in fact had evacuated Tullahoma earlier in the morning. The citizen explained that Bragg's infantry moved out during the night and that a great many of them were, at that moment, endeavoring to cross the bridges in the vicinity of Estell Springs.⁴²

At 10 A.M. Thomas informed Rosecrans of the above activities. Thomas also suggested that all three corps wheel south and begin a pursuit. Thomas felt McCook on the right should follow the railroad, XIV corps in the center would follow the Winchester road and Crittenden could move south on Thomas' left. Thomas went on to add that Stanley and the cavalry should move forward rapidly to Pelham via Hillsboro to get into the enemy's rear.⁴³

Rosecrans, up to the time he received Thomas' message, assumed Bragg intended to stay and fight. Thomas' information threw a new light on the situation. After a

quick evaluation of the reports, Rosecrans assented to Thomas' preparations to prepare for a pursuit, however, Rosecrans wanted see what Steedman turned up prior to ordering execution of a pursuit.⁴⁴

The results of the reconnaissance were not long in coming. After continued skirmishing with enemy cavalry, a regiment from Reynold's division entered Tullahoma at 11 A.M. followed shortly thereafter by Steedman's brigade. At 12 noon Steedman reported the Rebel infantry had left Tullahoma. Brannan arrived on the heels of Steedman and reported likewise. He added that the Rebel cavalry appeared to be the only force still opposing his advance regiments. Sheridan, who closed on Tullahoma with the remainder of Brannan's division, also confirmed the absence of enemy infantry at Tullahoma.⁴⁵

The discovery that Tullahoma was devoid of Bragg's infantry led Rosecrans to issue new orders, which reflected much of what Thomas had earlier recommended. McCook was to concentrate his corps in Tullahoma. Thomas received permission to send a portion of his corps south while the rest occupied Tullahoma. Rosecrans ordered Crittenden to move his corps to Pelham via Hillsboro. Turchin, with only one brigade of cavalry, [the other brigades were encamped near Walker's Mill in the vicinity of Manchester] received orders to march to Pelham, and then on toward the Cumberland Mountains to discover Bragg's retreat route.⁴⁶

The corps commanders took action as ordered. Thomas' corps, in effect the only force with units in active pursuit on the afternoon of the 1st, received the lion's share of the action. Thomas ordered Reynolds and Brannan to continue to move forward into Tullahoma. Additionally, both received instructions to secure all captured supplies and soldiers, and turn them over to Sheridan. On completion of this task they were to join Thomas near Hale's Mill (five miles from Tullahoma) the next day. Thomas ordered Negley, then Rousseau, to move south from Bobo's Cross-roads along the Winchester Road to Heffner's Mill.⁴⁷

During the course of the afternoon Negley maintained contact with the enemy rear guard as he advanced south. By nightfall Tullahoma was completely secured and Negley had driven the enemy just beyond Heffner's Mill. With the enemy defending the heights on the south side of the Elk River Rosecrans determined that more force at the crossing sites would be necessary to dislodge Bragg. His subsequent orders the night of 1 July indicate a belief that Bragg intended to hold the river line. The orders reflect also Rosecrans' adherence to flanking maneuvers.⁴⁸

Rosecrans scheme called for two of his corps to place pressure on Bragg's forces and, if possible, seize crossing sites at the Elk. At the same time other forces would skirt around the left flank to Bragg's rear. The maneuver ordered was in effect a parallel pursuit.

Rosecrans directed McCook and Thomas to supply the direct pressure force. Their movements would keep pressure on Bragg's rear and hopefully hasten his withdrawal.⁴⁹

Simultaneously with these movements, Rosecrans wanted Stanley to move his whole command directly to Decherd to create the impression that he intended to block Bragg's retreat. Rosecrans directed Crittenden to continue to send Wood's division to Pelham to secure the Federal left, but wanted Palmer's division to proceed to Hart's Tanyard near Stamper's Ferry. By this positioning, Crittenden would be ready to move directly south to University and would convey to Bragg an attempt to cut the line of retreat.⁵⁰

As the night wore on Rosecrans made minor adjustments to this plan of action. Rosecrans was extremely anxious to get forces down to the Elk. On no less than three occasions he sent messages to Thomas and Stanley urging them to hasten to the river.⁵¹ The reasons were twofold. First, Rosecrans wanted to maintain contact with Bragg's army. This allowed Rosecrans to determine if the enemy possessed the means to prevent a river crossing. Second, and equally important, the swollen rivers would make fording difficult. If Rosecrans could seize bridges intact it would make a crossing much easier, and thereby enable him to maintain pressure on Bragg.

As Rosecrans endeavored to reach the Elk River, Bragg considered the day's events and contemplated what to

do next. His infantry had safely crossed the Elk by noon of 1 July and his cavalry had fought well. Wheeler's men delayed Negley's forces long enough to allow Polk's and Hardee's infantry to establish defenses on the south bank of the Elk River. Additionally, Bragg's men managed to fire the Bethpage and Allisonia bridges as they retreated.⁵² Yet, with all this success, there remained problems.

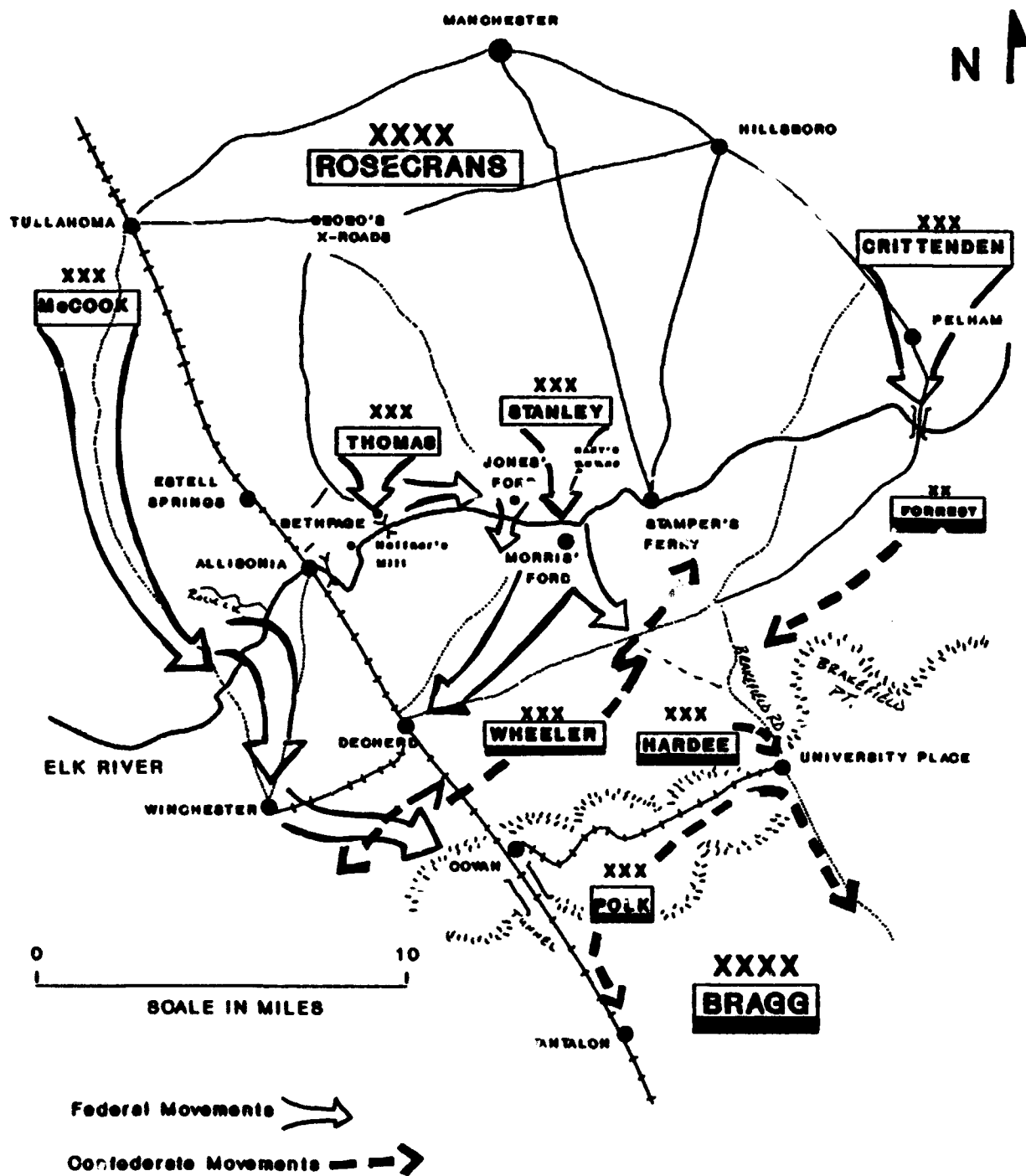
Bragg reasoned the river's water level would eventually fall. This would offer Rosecrans many undefended crossing sites between Hardee's right flank and Pelham. Of even more concern to Bragg was the advantage the crossing site at Pelham gave Rosecrans. If the Federals crossed at Pelham, Rosecrans would be virtually behind Bragg's retreat routes via Cowan or University. Bragg once again faced the dilemma of whether to defend or continue the retreat.⁵³

At this point Bragg's indecisive nature came into play. He asked Polk's advice as to whether the army should continue to retreat and he directed his engineers to repair the roads to the rear for retreat. In typical Bragg fashion, however, he also sent word to Richmond that he was now in a much better defensive line.⁵⁴ Such undecided behavior did little to promote Polk's and Hardee's confidence in Bragg's ability to defend on his new Elk River line. Both Hardee and Polk stated it was necessary to defend in the vicinity of the mountains at Cowan, yet Bragg seemed not to hear or care. Later, during the night, Hardee

sent word to Polk that he lacked confidence in Bragg's ability to direct a defense. Hardee further recommended a conference to sort out what should be done.⁵⁵

Bragg's subsequent actions that evening rendered the conference unnecessary. Bragg decided that retreat was again necessary. At 1:30 A.M. on 2 July Bragg ordered the army to move at daylight. Polk's destination was Cowan. Hardee received instructions to move up the Brakefield Point road toward University Place (Map 10). Buckner, the reserve located on the south side of Winchester, would precede Polk to Cowan. Bragg ordered Wheeler to maintain watch on the Elk River and dispute any enemy attempts to cross. Once Hardee's and Polk's corps were in position Wheeler would continue to harass the enemy, destroy the railroad bridge and defend the railway against use by the enemy.⁵⁶

Bragg's corps began movement promptly at daybreak on 2 July. As the morning progressed, however, Bragg seemed to continue his indecisive behavior. Shortly after the movement began, Bragg sent word to Polk to turn toward Decherd and defend there. As soon as Polk made the shift and headed toward Decherd he received new instructions ordering him to stick to the original plan and head for Cowan.⁵⁷ East of Polk, Hardee too, received conflicting instructions. His movement began on time, but faced constant contact with the Federal cavalry. However, Bragg issued conflicting orders indicating withdrawal then defense



Map 10. Movements on 2 through 3 July 1863.

and so on throughout the day. This meant the division commanders suffered similar confusion.⁵⁸

Cleburne, guarding the approaches near the Bethpage bridge, and Stewart, watching the crossings at Jones' and Morris' fords received conflicting instructions throughout the day. They received orders from Bragg through Hardee to hold their ground, then to retire, then to return and hold their ground again. Bushrod Johnson reported that in a 24 hour period he had crossed the Elk River three times, moved from the vicinity of Bethpage to Jones' Ford, sent detachments to Morris' Ford to assist Martin's cavalry and then moved southeast almost to Brakefield Point only to receive orders to return forward to defend near the intersection of the Brakefield and Hillsboro roads.⁵⁹

If Bragg's indecisiveness contributed to conflicting orders and a sense of confusion, so too did Federal actions on 2 July. With daylight came continued pressure along the length of Bragg's line. Rosecrans, somewhat chagrined by Wheeler's ability to slow Negley the previous day, aggressively pushed a river crossing. He told Thomas and McCook the object of the day was to push with all vigor and impress on the enemy that the whole Army of the Cumberland was on their heels. Additional instructions to Thomas indicated that Rosecrans expected Stanley to work for Thomas. Thomas and Stanley were then to cooperate to destroy the Confederate cavalry and trains.⁶⁰

In these instructions Rosecrans emphasized his desire for speed. By this time Rosecrans understood that Bragg was continuing a retreat. The unknown variable was where would Bragg stop? Rosecrans, for his part, wanted to make sure that Bragg had no option but to retreat past the Cumberland Mountains.

Early on the morning of the 2 July, Thomas provided a possible answer. Thomas procured information from a civilian that indicated Bragg was retreating on two routes; the Brakefield road leading to the University, and the road leading to Cowan. Thomas added that the civilian believed Bragg's army would not stop until it reached Chattanooga.⁶¹

There was another possibility that likely entered Rosecrans' mind. Bragg might opt to stop and defend at the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains near Cowan and University. Such a course of action would make it difficult for Rosecrans to fight Bragg on favorable terms. The long ridge line had few passes and favored the defender. If Rosecrans did try to maneuver around Bragg he would have to cut loose from his rail line of communications, which would necessitate a move through very difficult terrain over extended distances to get in Bragg's rear.

In order to preclude Bragg from establishing a defense in the mountains or continuing south toward Chattanooga, Rosecrans desperately needed crossings over the Elk River. This explained the need for speed and for an

advance on a broad front. The wider the front, the better the chances of finding a good bridge or ford site. The quicker the army got across the river the better the chances of convincing Bragg that further defense was futile.⁶²

Unfortunately for Rosecrans, weather and the enemy destruction of bridges hindered his scheme of maneuver. In the center, Thomas confirmed that the Bethpage Bridge was unusable in its present state. McCook on Thomas' right reported the bridges to his front destroyed as well. Crittenden, with Palmer's and Wood's divisions moving toward Hillsboro and Pelham respectively, reported only minor skirmishing, but that he had not as yet reached the Elk River due to poor road conditions.⁶³

As the day progressed, however, many of Rosecrans' subordinate commanders exercised initiative to overcome their obstacles. Thomas, after discovering that the Elk River bridges were down, directed three of his divisions to move further up the river to find crossing sites. He informed Rosecrans that once across the Elk he and Stanley would get into Bragg's flank and cut off the line of retreat.⁶⁴

During the morning Thomas moved Rousseau, Brannan and Reynolds northeast to Jones' Ford. Negley remained at the Bethpage bridge to fix the enemy's attention. Rousseau arrived at the ford first, and received a volley of enemy fire from elements of Martin's cavalry and Stewart's

infantry. Rousseau deployed immediately and drove the enemy away. The treacherous nature of the river, with its deep and rapid current, required Rousseau's men to put ropes across the river to use the ford. Once this occurred it took the better part of the afternoon to get one brigade across the river. By nightfall, Rousseau's 2nd Brigade occupied a defensive position approximately three-fourths of a mile south of the crossing.⁶⁵

Negley, too, achieved some success at his position at Bethpage bridge. Throughout the morning his artillery dueled with Wheeler's artillery on the opposite bank. Small arms fire between men of Cleburne's command and Negley's division was also exchanged periodically throughout the morning. By 2:30 P.M. Negley's skirmishers took possession of the flaming Bethpage bridge and managed to save part of the structure. Negley then brought up more infantry and by 3:30 P.M. drove the enemy from view of the bridge. Unfortunately, the bridge could not handle traffic and the river was still too deep to ford. As a result Negley could only hold what he had and await orders.⁶⁶

Negley also provided some valuable intelligence. Late in the afternoon he reported that the burned bridges near Allisonia were still under guard by the enemy. The enemy's purpose appeared to be to protect the rail line from envelopment. Negley believed that Bragg was directing the railroad cars to come close to that point to take on

supplies and troops. In this manner, he believed, the Confederates could hasten their withdrawal to Chattanooga.⁶⁷

Sheridan, as the lead division of McCook's corps, likewise endeavored to accomplish his mission. When Sheridan discovered he could not cross the Elk near Winchester Springs, he moved up river to look for another crossing site. Only after great difficulty did Sheridan find a suitable ford near the mouth of Rock Creek. Despite receipt of continuous fire from Wheeler's division on the far bank, Sheridan managed to get his cavalry across the river by late afternoon. Davis' division, close behind, encamped on the north bank with Sheridan's infantry to await the coming of daylight and hopefully, the falling of the river.⁶⁸

On the Federal left there was success as well. After receiving orders to proceed back to Hillsboro then to Decherd, Turchin's command reached Morris' Ford just after daylight on the 2 July. After a sharp skirmish the Rebel cavalry retreated across the ford and occupied some low bluffs on the opposite bank. The enemy artillery then fiercely contested Turchin's attempts to cross the ford. At 2 P.M. Stanley arrived with the remainder of Turchin's division. By late afternoon Stanley's force crossed the river and drove the Confederates back. Stanley continued to fight until midnight at which time the enemy broke off. Stanley then suspended further movements until daylight.⁶⁹

Crittenden's corps, on the far left of the Army, captured a crossing over the Elk as well. Brigadier General Thomas J. Wood's division arrived at Pelham by 12 noon. Wood fought a spirited engagement with cavalry under Forrest, who seeing that they were outnumbered, fired the bridge and withdrew. Wood's division, however, then seized the bridge and extinguished the flames. At that point, when Crittenden could have crossed the river and moved to assist Stanley, orders came from Rosecrans directing Crittenden to return Wood to Hillsboro. As a result, no crossing occurred at Pelham and Rosecrans lost a chance to cut off the forces of Wheeler's and Hardee's corps opposing Thomas, Stanley and Crittenden. This decision reflected a concern to leave some forces in a position to support the growing lines of communication. More importantly, it reflected Rosecrans intent not to cut Bragg off completely and force a decisive battle. Rather, Rosecrans continued to orient on forcing Bragg to withdraw.⁷⁰

As 2 July closed, multiple crossing sites were now in the hands of the Federals. However, stiff resistance at the crossing sites and high water slowed the Federal advance greatly. This provided Bragg with the necessary time to gather his forces and retreat further south. The coming of night allowed Bragg to continue this almost administrative move and, at the same time, hindered Rosecrans' ability to pursue.

Moreover, some of the Federal movements had occurred so rapidly that the advancing Federal corps lost communications with their left and right. Negley for example spent all day attempting unsuccessfully to reestablish contact with McCook on the right. On the left, Thomas was unable to tie in Stanley and Crittenden. This situation was largely a result of the movements that Crittenden and Stanley had made during the day. This failure to establish communication meant that these commanders had to exercise more caution to preclude a flank attack from the enemy.⁷¹

By sunset Rosecrans weighed the facts as he knew them and determined to continue with the plan as ordered. He directed crossings in the morning as soon as practicable. He also directed Granger to continue to push the telegraph and railroad forward. Morton received orders to get pontoons up to Thomas and Sheridan to ensure that a crossing on 3 July would be possible. In Rosecrans mind, at least, the pursuit would continue.⁷²

Although Rosecrans was concerned Bragg would defend along the Cowan - University Place line, that was not the case. In the late afternoon of 2 July, Bragg ordered a retreat to Chattanooga. These were the orders that in effect ended the campaign. Bragg's rationale for the retreat was simple. If he defended at Cowan, he would not be able to force Rosecrans into a fight. Rosecrans would

probably outmaneuver him, cut the line to Chattanooga and in all likelihood destroy the Army of Tennessee in the bargain.⁷³

It appears that Bragg did not understand the considerations that would enter Rosecrans' mind should the Army of Tennessee defend at Cowan. From Rosecrans' perspective all roads converged toward Cowan and University Place. It was not, therefore, a simple proposition to outmaneuver Bragg in this terrain. Bragg's lack of appreciation for terrain influenced his thinking. He did not believe he could conduct a successful defense at Cowan. He did not consider the naturally defensible terrain to stop Rosecrans. Furthermore, this time, Bragg did not solicit advice from his corps commanders and instead made the decision entirely on his own. Bragg reasoned that the land could offer him nothing. With his forces operating in the mountains there would be no forage for his army. Neither did Bragg appreciate the difficulty Rosecrans would have trying to flank a position in the mountains. The lack of roads and their distance from the railroad would make a wide envelopment unattractive to Rosecrans.⁷⁴

Throughout the night of the 2 July and the morning of the 3 July, Bragg's army slowly retreated up over the Cumberland Mountains and descended down into Sweeden's Cove toward Chattanooga. As the army moved south, Wheeler's cavalry remained in the rear to cover its withdrawal.

Bragg, however, failed to order Wheeler to destroy the railroad behind the retreating Confederates. Key to this failure, was that the Cowan Tunnel remained intact. Had Bragg destroyed the 2200 foot tunnel it is likely it would have taken the Federals several months to clear it and put the railroad in operation. Additionally, Bragg left the railroad south of the tunnel almost completely intact. The smaller bridges were burned, but not the larger ones. These failures later facilitated Federal repairs and the railroad was completely operable all the way to the Tennessee River by 25 July.⁷⁵

BRAGG ESCAPES AND THE CAMPAIGN ENDS

On the morning of 3 July the Army of the Cumberland, unaware of Bragg's decision to break off from the fight, advanced forward in anticipation of a day of heavy contact. Early in the morning Sheridan attacked forward into Winchester and drove the Confederate cavalry from that place. The remainder of McCook's corps completed its crossing of the Elk by mid-afternoon. By 3 P.M. Sheridan was at Cowan station and Davis' division was in Winchester.⁷⁶

Thomas' corps crossed the Elk at two different sites. Brannan and Rousseau crossed at Jones' Ford and continued southeast toward Brakefield Point. Negley and Reynolds crossed to Rousseau's right and moved parallel with him toward Brakefield Point. Reynolds had a particular

stroke of good luck as many of his men managed to cross on the Bethpage bridge, which was by then repaired enough to support infantry. By the end of the day, the XIV Corps occupied a line two miles from the crossing sites. As night fell on 3 July, men and equipment continued to shuttle across the river reinforcing the strength on the south bank.⁷⁷

Crittenden remained with his corps near Pelham and Hillsboro and thereby continued to portray a force readying to pounce on University. Stanley, like Sheridan, went far across the river on the 3 July. By evening he had forces at Decherd, Cowan, and Brakefield Point. Stanley's intelligence, combined with that of Sheridan, indicated that other than scattered cavalry rearguards, Bragg's army was gone.⁷⁸

On the morning of 4 July, reports from Stanley and Sheridan confirmed that Bragg's army was indeed gone. All that remained were a handful of regiments of Wheeler's cavalry. These cavalry regiments gave ground all too easily to be protecting much. After a sharp skirmish near University Place between Wharton's and Sheridan's cavalry, the Rebel opposition evaporated.⁷⁹

Rosecrans felt that Bragg had indeed withdrawn the Army of Tennessee toward Chattanooga. With this realization he halted the pursuit and ordered his units to find suitable encampments and occupy the countryside. He further directed

details to restore the roads and bridges to bring supplies forward. Following these orders Rosecrans moved over to Winchester to enjoy a 4th of July victory celebration with McCook.⁸⁰

SUMMARY

Thus ended this nine day campaign. Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland achieved great success. During a brilliant series of maneuvers, Rosecrans forced Bragg out of Middle Tennessee with only a light loss of troops. His total casualties were 560 compared to Bragg's which numbered 1700.⁸¹ Although Rosecrans did not destroy Bragg's army, his campaign did achieve the goals set by Halleck and Lincoln. Middle Tennessee was once again in Union hands and the railroad from Nashville was almost entirely intact all the way to the Tennessee River. Most notably, Bragg's army was now clearly on the defensive.

As Rosecrans reflected on the campaign he explained to Stanton that it was one of relentless marching amid the most drenching rains he had ever seen, yet it achieved great results. He was never more proud of his soldiers and their determination. Interestingly, Rosecrans believed the Army of the Cumberland might have done more. He believed the army could have maneuvered to Bragg's rear had it not been for the terrible ground conditions resulting from the heavy rains.⁸²

Bragg, for his part, attempted to play down his loss. He defended his withdrawal by stating that he had indeed offered the enemy battle, but that Rosecrans had declined. He said that he could not assail Rosecrans as the Federal army was greater in strength and had the better terrain for a defensive. Importantly, Bragg noted that continued defense in the mountains would greatly deplete his already weakened army by denying it the means to supply itself. For all this rationalization, the fact remained Bragg's retreat had inflicted a great psychological blow to his army. Of particular note, his decision to retreat did nothing to quell the clamorings for Bragg's relief. Bragg's infighting, indecisiveness, and poor performance in the field would continue and ultimately result in his removal from command in November 1863.⁸³

The conclusion of the Tullahoma campaign on 4 July coincided with the great Federal victories of Gettysburg and Vicksburg. With the three major Confederate armies defeated, the Confederacy would now clearly remain on the strategic defensive. The first week of July marked the attainment of the Federal strategic goals for the summer as laid down by Lincoln and Halleck. The war had indeed reached a turning point.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 4

- ¹OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 404.
- ²OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 407; 23/2: Bond to Reynolds, 27 June 1863, 474; 23/1: Negley to Thomas, 8 July 1863, 442.
- ³OR 23/1: Beatty to Negley, 6 July 1863, 445; 23/2: Garfield to Thomas, 28 June 1863, 477.
- ⁴OR 23/2: Garfield to Van Cleve, 27 June 1863, 475; Bond to Granger, 28 June 1863, 477.
- ⁵OR 23/2: Bond to Granger, 28 June 1863, 477.
- ⁶OR 23/1: Wilder to Thomas, 11 July 1863, 460.
- ⁷OR 23/1: Wilder to Thomas, 11 July 1863, 460.
- ⁸OR 23/1: Wilder to Thomas, 11 July 1863, 460.
- ⁹OR 23/1: Wilder to Thomas, 11 July 1863, 460.
- ¹⁰OR 23/1: Wilder to Thomas, 11 July 1863, 460.
- ¹¹OR 23/2: Garfield to Granger, 29 June 1863, 479; Bond to Granger, 28 June 1863, 477.
- ¹²OR 23/2: Bond to Granger, 28 June 1863, 477.
- ¹³OR 23/2: Granger to Rosecrans, 29 June 1863 (1:45 P.M.), 480.
- ¹⁴OR 23/2: Granger to Rosecrans, 29 June 1863 (1:45 P.M.), 480; 23/1: Stanley to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 540.
- ¹⁵Notably Breckinridge's division and elements of Van Dorn's old cavalry division. OR 23/2: Brannan to Garfield, 29 June 1863 (9:25 A.M.), 482.
- ¹⁶OR 23/2: Reynolds to Flynt, 29 June 1863, 484.

¹⁷OR 23/2: Garfield to Thomas, 29 June 1863 (10:40 A.M.), 482; Bates to Sheridan, 29 June 1863 (11:00 A.M.), 485.

¹⁸OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 461.

¹⁹OR 23/1: Wilder to Flynt, 11 July 1863, 461.

²⁰OR 23/1: Wilder to Flynt, 11 July 1863, 461.

²¹OR 23/1: Wilder to Flynt, 11 July 1863, 461.

²²OR 23/2: Garfield to Thomas, 29 June 1863 (11:45 P.M.), 483; 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 407.

²³OR 23/1: Stanley to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 542; Mitchell to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 545; Turchin to Stanley, 10 July 1863, 553.

²⁴Joseph H. Parks, General Leonidas Polk C.S.A.: The Fighting Bishop (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), 313; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 130; OR 23/2: Mackall to Wheeler, 29 June 1863 (4:00 P.M.), 891; Mackall to Wheeler, 29 June 1863 (4:15 P.M.), 891.

²⁵OR 23/1: W. B. Richmond Notes, 29 June 1863, 621; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 130.

²⁶OR 23/1: W. B. Richmond Notes, 29 June 1863, 621.

²⁷OR 23/1: W. B. Richmond Notes, 29 June 1863, 621-2; Lamers, Edge of Glory, 285; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 131.

²⁸OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 407; 23/2: Thomas to Rosecrans, 30 June 1863 (8:30 A.M.), 487; 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 432.

²⁹OR 23/1: Johnson to Stewart, 12 July 1863, 608; Parks, Polk C.S.A., 314.

³⁰OR 23/2: Granger to Rosecrans, 30 June 1863, 486; 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 432.

³¹OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 432; Negley to Thomas, 8 July 1863, 443.

³²OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 408.

³³Lamers, Edge of Glory, 283-4.

³⁴Lamers, Edge of Glory, 284.

³⁵OR 23/2: Garfield to Crittenden, McCook, Thomas, and Sheridan, 1 July 1863 (3:30 A.M.), 494.

³⁶Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 131; OR 23/1: Mackall to Polk in the Richmond Notes, 30 June 1863 (11:00 A.M.), 622; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 131; OR 23/2: Ro. to Stewart, 30 June 1863, 892-3; Colyar to Bragg, 30 June 1863, 893-4.

³⁷Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 131.

³⁸Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 131; Parks, Polk C.S.A., 314, OR 23/1: Mackall to Polk in the Richmond Notes, 30 June 1863 (11:00 A.M.), 622-3; Harvell and Elizabeth Purdue, Pat Cleburne: Confederate General (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Junior College Press, 1973), 194.

³⁹OR 23/1: Mackall to Polk in the Richmond Notes, 30 June 1863, 622-3, Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 131.

⁴⁰OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 408; Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 432; 23/2: Steedman to Lambert, 1 July 1863, 498.

⁴¹OR 23/2: Flynt to Reynolds, 1 July 1863, 501; Flynt to Negley, 1 July 1863, 500.

⁴²OR 23/2: Flynt to Brannan, 1 July 1863, 498-9; Thomas to Rosecrans, 1 July 1863 (10:00 A.M.), 498.

⁴³OR 23/2: Thomas to Rosecrans, 1 July 1863 (10:00 A.M.), 498.

⁴⁴OR 23/2: Rosecrans to Granger, 1 July 1863, 495.

⁴⁵OR 23/1: Reynolds to Flynt, ND., 457; Brannan to Flynt, 1 July 1863, 453, McCook to Rosecrans, 10 July 1863, 465.

⁴⁶OR 23/2: Garfield to McCook, 1 July 1863, 496; 23/1: Crittenden to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 522; Stanley to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 540; 23/2: Garfield to Stanley, 1 July 1863, 497.

⁴⁷OR 23/2: Thomas to Brannan, 1 July 1863 (2:00 P.M.), 499; 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 432.

⁴⁸OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 432; Lamers, Edge of Glory, 286.

⁴⁹OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 408. 23/2: Garfield to McCook, 1 July 1863 (12 Midnight), 496.

⁵⁰Garfield to Stanley, 1 July 1863 (7:15 P.M.), 497;
23/1: Crittenden to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 522.

⁵¹OR 23/2: Garfield to Stanley, 1 July 1863 (7:15),
497; Garfield to Thomas, 1 July 1863 (11:55 P.M.), 501;
Goddard to Thomas, 1 July 1863 (8:10 P.M.), 499-500.

⁵²Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 132.

⁵³Bragg did not realize it at the time, but the
Federals no longer held the bridge at Pelham. After
Wilder's withdrawal back to Manchester, elements of his
command vacated the bridge as well. Connelly, Autumn of
Glory, 132.

⁵⁴OR 23/2: Walter to Polk, 1 July 1863, 894.

⁵⁵23/1: Bragg to Cooper, 1 July 1863, 583; Hardee to
Polk, 1 July 1863, 623.

⁵⁶OR 23/1: Hardee to Polk in the Richmond Notes, 1
July 1863, 624; General Orders in the Richmond Notes, 2 July
1863, 624.

⁵⁷OR 23/1: Richmond Notes, 2 July 1863, 624.

⁵⁸Buck, Cleburne Command, 133.

⁵⁹Buck, Cleburne Command, 133; OR 23/1: Johnson to
Stewart, 12 July 1863.

⁶⁰William C. Dodson, Campaigns of Wheeler and His
Cavalry (Atlanta: Hudgins Publishing Company, 1899), 95-8;
OR 23/2: Rosecrans to Thomas, 2 July 1863 (8:30 A.M.), 504.

⁶¹OR 23/2: Thomas to Garfield, 2 July 1863 (8:30
A.M.), 504.

⁶²OR 23/2: Rosecrans to Granger, 2 July 1863, 503-4.

⁶³OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 432;
McCook to Rosecrans, 10 July 1863, 467; Crittenden to
Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 522.

⁶⁴OR 23/2: Hubbard to Goddard, 2 July 1863, 504-5.

⁶⁵OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 432.

⁶⁶OR 23/1: Negley to Flynt, 8 July 1863, 443-4; Negley
to Thomas, 2 July 1863, 441-442.

⁶⁷OR 23/1: Negley to Thomas, 2 July 1863, 441-2.

⁶⁸OR 23/1: Sheridan to Thurston, 7 July 1863, 515-6.

⁶⁹OR 23/1: Turchin to Stanley, 10 July 1863, 554-5.

⁷⁰OR 23/1: Crittenden to Rosecrans, 13 July 1863, 522; Turchin to Stanley, 10 July 1863, 555.

⁷¹OR 23/2: Negley to Thomas, 2 July 1863, 505; Thomas to Garfield, 3 July 1863.

⁷²OR 23/2: Garfield to Granger, 2 July 1863, 503; Garfield to Morton, 2 July 1863, 503.

⁷³OR 23/1: Mackall to Polk in the Richmond Notes, 2 July 1863, 625; Bragg to Cooper, 3 July 1863, Davis Papers, cited in Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 133.

⁷⁴Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 133.

⁷⁵OR 23/1: Richmond Notes, 3 July 1863, 625.

⁷⁶Lamers, Edge of Glory, 287; OR 23/1: McCook to Rosecrans, 10 July 1863, 467.

⁷⁷OR 23/1: Thomas to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 433; 23/2: Flynt to Negley, 3 July 1863, 509; Reynolds to Flynt, 3 July 1863, 509.

⁷⁸OR 23/1: Stanley to Rosecrans, 8 July 1863, 541.

⁷⁹Dodson, Wheeler, 97; OR 23/1: Sheridan to Thurston, 7 July 1863, 516.

⁸⁰OR 23/2: Garfield to Thomas, 4 July 1863 (6:00 A.M.), 512; Lamers, Edge of Glory, 288.

⁸¹Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 134.

⁸²OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 433; 23/2: Rosecrans to Burnside, 8 July 1863, 522.

⁸³OR 23:/1: Bragg to Johnston, 3 July 1863, 584; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 134.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Campaign plans are designed to attain strategic objectives, such as the control of territory or the defeat of an enemy force in the area of operations. To accomplish these objectives the operational commander must understand the fundamentals of operational art and apply them appropriately. The Tullahoma campaign highlights several of the actions critical for successful operational planning and warfighting. These include the translation of strategic guidance into an operational plan, offensive and defensive operational planning, effective use of deception, sustainment of operations, and establishing a positive leadership climate.

TRANSLATION OF GUIDANCE INTO AN OPERATIONAL PLAN

FM 100-5, Operations, states that "Operational planning begins with strategic guidance to a theater commander or with the commander's recognition of a mission in an active theater of operations."¹ This concept reflects the heart and soul of our modern operational doctrine, however, it was just as relevant in 1863. After an examination of the Tullahoma campaign it is apparent that

one army commander received guidance that reflected clearly developed aims, whereas the other did not.

Once the theater commander receives the strategic guidance or deduces a mission for his theater of operations he has attendant responsibilities to formulate a plan of action. He must determine how he will defeat the enemy. In doing so he normally attempts to accomplish the mission decisively while limiting losses of lives and material. The commander must also consider the enemy's intentions and capabilities in conjunction with his guidance as he plans operations.²

Halleck's guidance to Rosecrans established the aim, or in slightly different terms, the vision for what had to happen in Rosecrans' theater of operations. Rosecrans for his part took the guidance and translated it into a plan of action. By modern terms he did quite well. By the standards of his day he did a superb job. He was able to do this because Halleck's long range goals were logical, clear, and specific, and provided all the necessary information for Rosecrans to begin his planning.

In his translation of Halleck's operational guidance, Rosecrans developed a six point operational plan. The first two points encompassed his operations during the Tullahoma campaign. Throughout the campaign Rosecrans never wavered from his goal of first causing Bragg to vacate

his defenses, and second, causing him to leave Middle Tennessee.

In his planning, Rosecrans demonstrated a firm grasp of the importance of specifying how he would defeat Bragg. Halleck's guidance reflected a geographical orientation and Rosecrans' plan became dominated by this aspect. Admittedly, Rosecrans gave consideration to a decisive battle as well but by his own admission it was something he intended to enter into only if Bragg tried to fight.³ In Middle Tennessee Rosecrans' primary focus was on terrain, not the enemy force.

Rosecrans also understood the importance of achieving Halleck's aims without needless loss of life. Rosecrans was well aware that forcing Bragg's army to retreat was the least costly way to accomplish the mission. This awareness reinforced Rosecrans' campaign philosophy of maneuver versus decisive engagement. Essentially, Rosecrans hoped to defer a major battle with Bragg's army until after he had seized Chattanooga.

Rosecrans' six point strategy also considered what military officers today call sequels (actions after the battle).⁴ Rosecrans' strategy went far beyond the immediate objective of driving Bragg from Middle Tennessee. He outlined the general actions that would follow Bragg's withdrawal from Middle Tennessee and specified the sequels

necessary to seize Chattanooga, and then destroy Bragg's army.

Bragg, however, did not receive similar clear guidance from his superiors. As a result Bragg had to deduce his mission and design an operational plan without the benefit of his superiors' vision. While the record of events tends to make Bragg look incompetent, or at the very least, lacking as an operational planner, Bragg did attempt to deny Rosecrans Middle Tennessee.

Unlike Davis, Bragg was not a believer that the Confederacy could hold everything. Like Joseph Johnston, Bragg knew certain areas were more important than others. Bragg questioned the value of Middle Tennessee, but he clearly understood the importance of maintaining his army as a fighting force. He also understood the necessity of protecting Chattanooga. This combination, in the absence of firm guidance from Richmond, essentially established the vision for Bragg's mission.

Bragg's evacuation of Middle Tennessee thus reflected his concern for his army and Chattanooga. When it became apparent Rosecrans might destroy or bypass the Army of Tennessee, Bragg did what he considered essential. He moved to Chattanooga to protect it and reestablish a better line of defense. This behavior does not represent the lack of an understanding of operational warfare. It reflects the

behavior of a man following operational guidance as he had deduced it!

DEFENSIVE OPERATIONAL PLANNING

The ultimate goals of defensive campaigns are to defeat an attacking force to retain territory, to buy time for other units to reinforce the theater, or to prepare for subsequent offensive operations. If the defender must cover a large area for an extended period, without hope of reinforcement, he must take risk and incorporate economy of force into his operations so as to be strong at the point of decision.⁵

Bragg's occupation of a line, which concentrated most of his combat power and controlled the railroad, represented an operational understanding of some of the key considerations for an effective defensive campaign. Bragg's defensive orientation attempted not only to protect his own line of communication but to threaten Rosecrans' line of communication as well. Clearly, Bragg understood the strategic significance of the terrain south of the Tennessee River. Bragg knew that the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad was critical for supporting any Federal advance toward Chattanooga and Atlanta. He also knew that the terrain south of the Elk River made movement of armies and supplies dependent on the railroad.

This is the most important reason why Bragg should not be condemned for his willingness to yield Middle

Tennessee. After all, he needed access to the railroad just as much as did Rosecrans, and Bragg's defense exhibited consideration of this need. It was entirely correct for Bragg to remain oriented on the line of communication when considering the defensive options. Bragg concentrated his defenses along the rail line in Middle Tennessee and the dispositions of Polk's and Hardee's corps supported the defense of the rail line.

Part and parcel of a successful defensive campaign is the understanding of centers of gravity. Civil War generals were not familiar with this Clausewitzian term, but they did exhibit some understanding of the concept. Bragg's defensive line protected his withdrawal route (the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad), which in turn protected his own center of gravity -- his army.

Bragg, however, seems to have been preoccupied with Rosecrans' army as an enemy center of gravity, rather than truly looking to the rail line of communication. Bragg's entire defensive plan seemed oriented on the avenues of approach Rosecrans was likely to use. The rail line and terrain to its west best supported a move by the Federals toward Wartrace and Shelbyville, so Bragg positioned his main force there.

Additional proof that Bragg oriented primarily on Rosecrans' army is his concept to regain the initiative. In his plan Bragg envisioned defensive and offensive

maneuver complementing each other to destroy Rosecrans' army. He never seriously considered maneuver to threaten or destroy Rosecrans' line of communication. Bragg, in essence, equated his enemy's "center of gravity" with his own (his force) and planned accordingly. However, even had Bragg considered attacking Rosecrans' line of communication, his army's ability to execute any plan was limited.

Where Bragg does deserve great criticism is at the tactical level. Bragg failed to do what is absolutely critical at the tactical level; he did not anticipate his enemy or seriously consider the indirect approaches available to Rosecrans. Because of his orientation on Rosecrans' army, Bragg essentially gave up any real possibility of designing tactical operations aimed at striking Rosecrans' weakness; the rail line of communications. Bragg's plan was one of passive defense and as such placed him in the position of reacting to Rosecrans' movements rather than seeking to disrupt those movements. Failure to appreciate the tactical nature of terrain or understand his enemy led Bragg to provide inadequate protection for his force and line of communication. He failed to defend properly the gaps that controlled access to his right flank. Because of his operational fixation with the importance of the rail line for his own army, Bragg never understood that Rosecrans might opt for an indirect approach to seize it. He believed Rosecrans would not take

the difficult routes, but instead, would attack on the better terrain forward of Shelbyville. As a result Bragg did not ensure that Hardee could prevent a flank attack.

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONAL PLANNING

The ultimate goal of offensive campaigns is to reach a decision before the attacker loses the means to conduct further offensive action. The primary purposes of offensive campaigns include defeating enemy forces, seizing and securing key or decisive terrain, disrupting enemy attacks, deceiving the enemy, and depriving the enemy of resources. If the offensive commander must attack a concentrated enemy, he should attempt to maneuver and force the enemy to quit his position or fight at a disadvantage. These concepts are key to an attacker's attainment of his objectives.⁶

Rosecrans' offensive scheme embodied these concepts and reflected the essence of successful offensive maneuver. Clearly, Rosecrans understood offensive campaigns against a concentrated enemy and sought to force the enemy to abandon his position or fight at a disadvantage. Realizing that Bragg occupied strong defensive works, Rosecrans directed his operations against the flanks and rear of Bragg's defenses. Rosecrans conducted penetrations of Bragg's defensive lines through the weak areas that allowed envelopment. Furthermore, he oriented these envelopments on tactical objectives that supported his operational goal.⁷

Rosecrans' initial moves sought to place forces on Bragg's weak flank (Manchester) to penetrate, then envelop his forward positions. Once this occurred, Rosecrans feinted toward Tullahoma with the mass of his army. He then sent a portion of the army to destroy the bridges and the railroad that controlled Bragg's communications. The threat to these communications was enough to force Bragg's withdrawal. Once Bragg began his retreat in earnest and abandoned Middle Tennessee, Rosecrans halted to prepare his army for further movements. Rosecrans realized that a further advance without an adequate line of communication, and the necessary supplies for extended campaigning, could easily imperil the Army of the Cumberland should Bragg elect to contest its movement. Rosecrans' decision to halt, which meant deferring the fight with Bragg, was, however, fully a part of his overall operational plan.

Rosecrans' preoccupation with his plan of maneuver, which meant that he postponed decisive battle with Bragg, is significant. Whenever a commander orients on maneuver, rather than on destruction of his enemy, he foregoes an opportunity to inflict decisive defeat. Rosecrans evidently appreciated this because his six point plan envisioned fighting Bragg at a later time. Consequently, in what became known as the Chickamauga Campaign, Rosecrans seized Chattanooga, then oriented on destroying Bragg's army. This deferring of battle, however, would ultimately allow the

initiative to shift to Bragg. Rosecrans would then lose his decisive battle, under conditions far less favorable than he enjoyed during the Tullahoma Campaign!

DECEPTION

Another notable aspect of operational art in this campaign was the use of operational deception. In practically all cases, deception is vital to operational success. A commander must strive to confuse and mislead his enemy as to his goals and when, where, and how he will concentrate for battle. Ideally, his concept will embody an indirect approach to safeguard his strength for the decisive battle.⁸ To do so he must understand his enemy and optimally convince the enemy that he will do what the enemy believes he will.

Bragg failed almost completely in this regard. He did nothing to conceal his true dispositions from Rosecrans. Once he established his defensive line on the Duck River Bragg remained in the same basic positions for six months. As a result of cavalry probes and civilian information there was little doubt in Rosecrans' mind where Bragg's strength lay.

The one area that Bragg may have inadvertently created deception was in the defenses of the gaps forward of his main line. As indicated by Rosecrans' and Thomas' remarks to Reynolds and Wilder after the taking of Hoover's Gap, the Federals believed Bragg's forces defended the gaps

in strength.⁹ This did have an effect on Rosecrans' plan, because he assumed two days were needed to force Hoover's Gap and reasonably sent Crittenden via the longer route. The time it took Thomas to attack through the gap would allow, in theory, enough time for Crittenden to move his distance and thus be close at hand when Thomas broke through.

Unlike Bragg, Rosecrans gave a great deal of thought to operational deception. He sought from the beginning to do what is absolutely necessary for a successful deception operation -- to make his opponent believe what his opponent was inclined to believe. Rosecrans saw Bragg build his defense to counter a threat advancing on the most direct avenues to Shelbyville and Tullahoma. Rosecrans, therefore, aimed at confirming what Bragg expected.

During the first phase of the campaign, Rosecrans skillfully painted a picture of the main attack falling on the Shelbyville front. At the same time, his main movements indicated nothing more than reints to draw Bragg's attention from the perceived main attack on the Shelbyville front. The idea was brilliantly executed and Bragg reacted accordingly.

The skill with which Rosecrans conducted his deception was evident even after Hoover's Gap fell. Rosecrans continued heavy attacks on Guy's and Liberty Gaps while turning the weight of Thomas' corps toward Wartrace.

This maneuver continued to portray a massive attack toward Shelbyville and the railroad near Wartrace which, in turn, allowed Rosecrans to claim the route to Manchester.

After maneuvering Bragg from the Duck River line and into Tullahoma, Rosecrans continued his deception. By his movements, Rosecrans attempted to once again rivet Bragg's attention at the wrong place while other elements sought to threaten Bragg's escape route and cause Bragg to give up the defenses. Indeed, it was deception that proved most critical to the campaign's outcome. Deception pushed Bragg to evacuate Middle Tennessee without causing any significant Federal casualties.

SUSTAINMENT

Another important aspect of this campaign is that of operational sustainment and its influence on the campaign. The campaign plans of both army commanders reflect a concern for continued sustainment in their area of operations. Both armies were dependent on the railroad, although Bragg relied more on local forage than did Rosecrans.

In fact, Bragg's defensive plan took his need for supplies into account at least as much as the threat from Rosecrans. Bragg's line, while concentrated primarily at Wartrace and Shelbyville, extended to a width of over seventy miles. This broad frontage was necessary to provide the forage for his cavalry and fresh livestock for his troops.

This is not to say that Bragg did not rely on the railroad for resupply of critical items such as ammunition and dry goods. He did need the railroad to move these items from his storehouses in Chattanooga. The fact remains, however, that much of his foodstuffs came from the countryside, which overcame limitations of the Confederate supply system. The land in the Cumberland Mountains afforded Bragg nothing in the way of beef, grain or forage. If he defended there his army would likely have starved. Faced with this predicament it is easy to see why Bragg did not stop after crossing the Elk. If Bragg stopped at Cowan and University he would need to extend his forage lines deep into Alabama and Georgia to procure subsistence. The problem with such a course of action was that the railroad did not run from middle Alabama directly to the Cowan position. This meant the only way to move the forage would be by using wagons to transport the forage to the nearest railheads. Distance and time would make resupply difficult, if not impossible.¹⁰

Rosecrans, while dependent to an extent on forage, could rely more on the railroad. The reason was more than a superior Federal supply system. During its occupation of Murfreesboro, Bragg's army had completely scoured the countryside and requisitioned everything of value to an army. As a result, Rosecrans was forced to depend on the

railroad to move practically every form of supplies from his bases in Nashville and Louisville.

Rosecrans, ever mindful of the need for these supplies to sustain momentum, was therefore tied to the railroad. His plan reflected this need and Rosecrans always operated within a day's wagon distance of the railroad. Throughout the execution of the campaign, Rosecrans ensured the engineers and infantry repaired the railroad rapidly.

Rosecrans also understood the effects of an interdicted line of supply on his enemy. His orders to Wilder to fire the bridges across the Elk and his subsequent orders to Stanley and Thomas to cut Bragg's rail line reflect a primary desire to prevent Bragg from using the line for resupply. It also reflected an understanding that threatening an enemy's line of communications would cause the enemy to react to Federal initiative.

LEADERSHIP

An important insight in this campaign is that of leadership and what it means to the prosecution of campaigns. Leadership encompasses not only the operational, tactical, and technical proficiency of a commander but his command climate as well. Through his sound leadership, the operational commander can hopefully foster the same in his subordinates. FM 100-5 goes so far as to say that "The skill and personality of a strong commander represent a significant part of his unit's combat power."¹¹

The army commanders in this campaign demonstrate the truth of such a statement. In each case the army commander greatly influenced the performance of his forces by his leadership. Rosecrans provided positive influence, but Bragg illustrates much that is undesired in an operational leader.

Prior to the campaign Rosecrans did those things required of a competent leader. He analyzed the situation and, through his plan, demonstrated a firm grasp of operational planning and execution. He solicited the input of his subordinate commanders, but at all times maintained firm control of the maneuver of his army.

Rosecrans' subordinate leaders respected him. There is little evidence within the Official Records, letters and other primary sources to suggest that Rosecrans' corps commanders took exception with his plan or scheme of maneuver. Each corps commander carried out his orders to the best of his ability without complaint. Rosecrans, in turn, paid high compliments to his subordinate commanders for their dedication and perseverance.¹²

This positive leadership climate allowed subordinate commanders to see opportunities and exercise initiative. It meant that individuals took actions in the absence of orders without fear of beratement. It meant further that the overall efficiency of the army increased. Wilder's seizure of Hoover's Gap, Minty's charge into Shelbyville, and

Sheridan's perseverance in finding a crossing over the Elk River were the manifestations of initiative in a positive command climate.

Alternatively, Bragg's leadership was less than desirable. His failures resulted less from a lack of competence than from a lack of positive command climate. Other than Wheeler, Bragg's subordinate commanders had no faith in Bragg's ability. This in turn reduced the Army of Tennessee's ability to accomplish any planned missions. If subordinates feel a commander is incompetent, or do not respect him, they will likely not support him. These feelings go far to undermining the commander's ability to plan and execute successfully.

Bragg's very nature precluded a positive command climate. His insistence that he was always correct, particularly after he solicited input from his subordinates, and his demands to do things his way established disharmony in his command. Bragg's indecisiveness under pressure exacerbated the problem. Bragg simply feared that he might make a mistake, which translated into indecisiveness. As a result, Bragg's army lost much of its potential combat power. Instead of obeying orders without complaint, Bragg's subordinates tended to question them. A further result of this heavy handed environment was that Bragg's subordinate leaders did not take initiative for fear of chastisement.

This poor leadership climate was perhaps the greatest single contributor to Bragg's failures at Tullahoma. If Bragg had listened to Hardee's concerns about the right flank, if he had ensured that Polk and Hardee understood the offensive defensive idea, or perhaps if he had just shown a little more tolerance, his subordinates may have contributed positive words and actions. Unfortunately, Bragg's personality and the damage it caused within his army precluded any valuable dialogue and undercut individual initiative. This damage was done long before Rosecrans moved forward and it significantly hindered Bragg's attempt to hold Middle Tennessee.

AN OVERVIEW

Thus, understanding these insights from a little known Civil War campaign, is significant for our ability to conduct operational warfighting today. The dominant thread that runs throughout, however, is the ability at all levels, of the commander to translate a superior's guidance into an operational plan and conduct the campaign. Clear operational guidance, wise planning, clever deception, adequate sustainment, and positive leadership all contribute to this ability. Only by combining these critical pieces can the operational commander design and conduct a campaign capable of accomplishing its strategic objectives.

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 5

¹United States, Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5, Operations (Washington: GPO, 1986), 28.

²FM 100-5, 29.

³OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 404.

⁴FM 100-5, 31.

⁵FM 100-5, 131.

⁶FM 100-5, 94, 109-11.

⁷FM 100-5, 111.

⁸FM 100-5, 30.

⁹Wilder, "Hoover's Gap," 2.

¹⁰OR 23/1: Bragg to Johnston, 3 July 1863, 584;
DuBose, Wheeler, 174.

¹¹FM 100-5, 14.

¹²OR 23/1: Rosecrans to Stanton, 24 July 1863, 408-9.

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1

ORDER OF BATTLE: ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND

The following order of battle reflects division level and higher commands. The Official Records contain the detailed order of battle for the Army of the Cumberland. The information presented is an extract of Report Number 3: Organization of Troops in the Department of the Cumberland, OR 23/1: June 30, 1863, pages 411 to 418.

Army of the Cumberland

Major General William S. Rosecrans

Fourteenth Army Corps

Major General George H. Thomas

First Division

Major General Lovell H. Rousseau

Second Division

Major General James S. Negley

Third Division

Brigadier General John M. Brannan

Fourth Division

Major General Joseph J. Reynolds

Twentieth Army Corps

Major General Alexander McD. McCook

First Division

Brigadier General Jefferson C. Davis

Second Division

Brigadier General Richard W. Johnson

Third Division

Major General Philip H. Sheridan

Twenty-First Army Corps

Major General Thomas L. Crittenden

First Division

Brigadier General Thomas J. Wood

Second Division

Major General John M. Palmer

Third Division

Brigadier General Horatio P. Van Cleve

Reserve Corps, Army of the Cumberland

Major General Gordon Granger

First Division

Brigadier General Absalom Baird

Second Division*

Brigadier General James D. Morgan

Third Division*

Brigadier General Robert S. Granger

Cavalry Corps

Major General David S. Stanley

First Division

Brigadier General Robert B. Mitchell

Second Division

Brigadier General John B. Turchin

* At Nashville on garrison duty.

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2

ORDER OF BATTLE: THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE

The following order of battle reflects division level and higher commands. The information presented is an extract of the information found in Report Number 90: Abstracts from Returns of Department No. 2, for June 20 and July 10, 1863; OR 23/1: June 20 and July 10, 1863, pages 585 to 586.

The Army of Tennessee

General Braxton Bragg

First Army Corps

Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk

Wither's Division

Major General Jones M. Withers

Cheatham's Division

Major General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham

Second Army Corps

Lieutenant General William J. Hardee

Stewart's Division

Major General Alexander P. Stewart

Cleburne's Division

Major General Patrick R. Cleburne

Reserve Division, Army of Tennessee*

Major General Simon Bolivar Buckner

* Major General Buckner commanded the Department of East Tennessee. Responding to Bragg's request for reinforcement on 23 June 1863, Buckner departed Knoxville, Tennessee on 27 June with 3,000 troops and a battery of artillery. He joined Bragg at Tullahoma on 30 June, and by 7 July was back in Tennessee.

Cavalry: The Army of Tennessee
Major General Joseph Wheeler, Chief of Cavalry

Wheeler's Corps
Major General Joseph Wheeler
(Also retained command of his division)

Wheeler's Division
Major General Joseph Wheeler

Wharton's Division
Brigadier General John A. Wharton

Martin's Division*
Brigadier General Will T. Martin

Morgan's Division**
Brigadier General John H. Morgan

Forrest's Division***
Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest

* On service with Forrest's command at the start of the Tullahoma campaign.

** Morgan's division did not participate in Tullahoma Campaign. His division was enroute to Ohio to conduct a raid during the campaign.

*** Forrest's Division was not part of Wheeler's Cavalry Corps, however, Forrest did come under Wheeler's command.

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